



“DREAM BIG”

But, Make the Best of what you Got!

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INTRODUCTION (Pre-Ramble)

I'm sitting here in a 55+ retirement community in south Florida. My daughter and I are together again for the first time in 5 years and living together for the first time in 15 years. Personally, it's a great time to be alive! As boring as it sounds we've spent 100 hours laughing, telling corny jokes, and laughing so hard we have to crawl on the floor.... we couldn't walk.

Seriously, how many people get that kind of second chance to re-connect with their kids after they are grown? We scuba, bike ride. Snorkel, metal detect, and a hundred other enjoyments every day. We spend almost nothing and have the time of our lives. But there is a second motivation. I ride my bike around the lake in the mornings and I look at the faces of the people going to work as they drive by. It looks like 90% of them are absolutely miserable. It makes me realize that by sheer circumstance, I've been fortunate beyond what any one person deserves.

The stories that follow are true to the best of my knowledge and that CRS combined with STML will allow (that's "**Can't Remember Shit**" combined with "**Short Term Memory Loss**"). I have to chuckle when I apologize to you before you read this. Most people would say "I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I did writing it"; or some such dribble. Writing sucks! You have to focus, think, sit long hours working, hoping you don't screw up, and that people will actually read the damn thing. Hopefully those hundreds of man hours weren't lost or wasted. Believe me it's the literary equivalent of getting fired but there's no severance or unemployment. OH yea, I almost forgot the most important part: It's all you. No excuses, no one else to blame. So I'll say....."I hope you read this but dude, living it Was better!" Sorry.

For all the baby boomers out there you better get off your butts. It doesn't matter where you live. I don't care if it's Cairo, Egypt; Karlsruhe, Germany; Bogger Hole, Arkansas; or Transylvania, Louisiana. Life is lived outside and in all the places in the world simultaneously. It's non-stop, 24/7, 365 days a year. That's pretty cool all by itself. But MOST IMPORTANTLY.....History only happens once. All things only happen once. Time and land are the only 2

commodities that cannot be replaced once gone.

I have to side with the time people myself. "Things don't have any real value". I'll explain further. First, what do they teach little kids in Sunday school and then later in grade school.

1. It's better to Give than Receive
Volunteer, Donate, Give, Give, Give
2. Do what the government says, do what your elders and the authorities say to do.
The Government only does what's best for us.
Politicians look out for our welfare.
It's a Democracy that works
The Police are there to protect us. It says "Protect and Serve" right on the door.
3. Go to college, get married, raise a family, buy a house, have 2.5 kids
4. Believe in God or go to hell. Listen to the Priest/Pastors or go to hell. Do what we say or go to hell.

God, listen to me ramble. Oh shit, now I've done it. I've used the Lord's name in vain. "Goin to hell for sure!" Damn
ttttt...hhhh... "thanh....thh....bad luck.

Can I explain? Honestly, didn't mean to dis god. I was so happyand you know I have a STUTTER problem. In reality, I was trying to say "Thank God, I'm so happy..... I'm rambling". YeaThat's it.

Bear with me please.....It's not "old Timers" I swear. I need 4 more paragraphsssoops...finger is stuttering.....All right, all right, back to the movie; Where am I?.....I mean where was I? (Glassford 2013 (Give or Take)). Now let's continue: As Paul Harvey, I have a lot of respect for that man) God Rest His Soul! ; would have said "*And now....the rest of the story*" **HOW WAS THAT FOR RAMBLING?**

1. (A) *Better to Give* the Church 10% annually (The Catholic Church is the biggest property owner in the world). I'm guestimating, but I bet that 50% of the world's population is represented by organized religion.

(b) What's 10% of fifty percent of the world's entire population individual earnings? *I'm terrible at math but that sounds like a pretty big pie!*

(c) Now who can blame anyone, for wanting a piece of that pie? The big organized religions have had the market sewn up for centuries. In my mind, like any big, organization, there are fringe humans that refuse to conform or be controlled. That's ok. These "scabs" are targeted by cults, agnostic groups, or whatever. The point is: Name me one of these organizations that don't ask for "**A Donation of some kind.....preferably monetary.**"

(d) If your new and try to break into that club can anyone guess how these groups demonize your small organization? They call you a cult, you worship the devil, or you **have false prophets:** whatever it takes to make you evil. From a religious standpoint, evil is hard to defend against but easy to accuse of. Just look at the "Dark Ages "for an example. Be real now.....wouldn't you defend your share?...Put on top of that the little voice on one shoulder saying "wouldn't it be cool to have your share and part of a whole share, maybe even all their share; after all they don't deserve it. **You deserve it more.**"

2. (A) **Pay your taxes.** Any logical person realizes that it takes a certain amount of money to invest in infrastructure. Roads, Docks, Electricity, etc. have to be invested in. Just play Sim City, a computer game. State and Federal Income taxes of 25% are just

and reasonable to cover these expenses.
We all use them and we all I need them.

“I read in the Tampa Tribune yesterday that the City of Tampa was upset because it was going to lose 1.9 million in estimated revenue for fiscal year 2014. This loss was from one revenue stream, the tax on land line phone lines. They already have a new one on cell phones and three times as many people have cell phones, but let’s not talk about that. Golly, you have to feel bad for them though, that’s less of the more of our money they can justify taking.”

Is it me? It must be that wrong thinking again, but I

hear that little voice again.
He says what about.....

Grocery Tax

Gas Tax

Utility Tax

Bond Taxes

FCC TAX

School District Tax

Income Tax

Birth Tax

Road Tax

Property Tax

FICA Tax

Fire District Tax

Death Tax

Luxury Tax

Special Use Tax

Sales Tax

Inheritance Tax

Taxing my Patience Tax

I'm not a statistician. I can add
(2+2+2) 3 times and get at least 2
different answers. Multiple choice
questions: What percentage of total
individual income tax, is represented
above?

- a. Still 25%. The other taxes don't count because they are temporary. (The rate throughout the 1960's when one family member could work and support a family.

- b. 30%... By spreading the cost across the board everyone pays a little more only.
- c. 65%, the highest rate of all civilized countries.
- d. 100%, don't worry, it seems this way but it is really 95%.

The correct answer is "c". Answer A represents what politicians would like you to believe but not reality. Answer b is what politicians tell you in re-election years, but also does not represent reality. Answer d represents pure communism. (Estimated to be achieved in the U.S. by the year 2020. Please note that in previous discussions we assume the following:

- Anarchy - 0% of individual earnings.

- Feudal – 60% of individual earnings.
- ◆ Tyrant - 80% of individual earnings
 - Democracy – 50% of individual earnings.
 - Fascism – 70% of individual earnings.
 - Socialism – 80% of individual earnings,
 - Communism 100%

3. (A) Go to college, get married, raise a family, buy a house, have 2.5 kids

- Only 40% of college graduates work in their fields of study.
- The national divorce rate in the U.S. is 54% as of 2012.
- 2.5 kids are not enough. You need at least 8-10. You get 1,500.00 in the child credit your Form 1040 provides. That's 15,000.00 cash and not working at all.

5. **Believe in God or go to hell.**

Listen to the Priest/Pastors or go to hell. Do what we say or go to hell.

SORRY

.....
.....**EVERYONE IS GOING TO HELL.**

6. *Do what the government says, do what your elders and the authorities say to do.*

The Government only does what's best for us.

Politicians look out for our welfare. It's a Democracy that works

The Police are there to protect us. It says "Protect and Serve" right on the door.

What's the rest of the story?

Do what the government says, do what your elders and the authorities say to do.

- It's easier to teach people to think "right" at a young age. They are easier controlled when they are older if you do.

❖ *The Government only does what's best for us.*

- Tell that to every politician caught in a scandal or impeachable offense. By the way, many politicians have entered politics poor or only moderately wealthy. How many politicians leave office poor or with the same amount of wealth they went in with?

❖ *Politicians look out for our welfare. It's a Democracy that works*

If you honestly believe this go to the Salvation Army on 8th and Pennsylvania at 11:00 a.m. Monday thru Friday in Joplin, Mo... You get a pretty good free meal that's safe and nutritious. They feed about 200-300 people per meal. In a town of 40,000 that's amazing. I volunteered all of November and all of December 2012. It was 287 hours and I enjoyed every minute of it. What Americans

don't know is that the police and judicial systems in the city of Joplin have created a corps of indentured servants. Believe me it's not to teach these people a lesson, its control, intimidate and to use as a source of free labor for every city department and other organization that needs free labor. It's obscene and I wouldn't have believed it possible in the U.S. I'd seen it in third world countries but not here. It is getting to the point of being like NAZI Germany or Italy under Mussolini in the 1930's. But, the pendulum always swings back and forth. We can only hope that it swings back toward democracy soon. All in all, the police in this country have changed from helping in many jurisdictions to protecting and serving only their own interest.

*The Police are there to protect us.
It says "Protect and Serve" right
on the door.*

- . They don't need probable cause and you don't have rights. Say this to them and you go to jail for 24 hours. They aren't the only ones. We're living in a period identical to after

Vietnam.....remember Rambo?
Better watch out. Quick addition, at the moment I'm homeless living in a tent in the backyard of friends. My daughter and I were "ran" and treated like scum, by the same type of cops that are in Hancock County, MS. My friend had a problem with his son and the police were called. His son ran off. They came back 4 times 3 of those times, when my friend Moe wasn't home. Officer Alphonso of the Hancock County Sheriff's Office is an asshole and a thug. He threatened me and my daughter with harboring a fugitive and threatened us with arrest and we were only staying in a tent in the back yard. Doing nothing wrong is not acceptable anymore to law enforcement in this country. It's obscene that we pay these assholes for this treatment.

- One small note: I wrote this over 3 months ago. Yesterday I read a great article in the Wall Street Journal. Look it up if you can. It's around July 19th, 2013 and talks about the "militarization" OF THE POLICE ALL ACROSS America.

- I call these people representatives of the **"NEW AMERICA."** It's the America that's just coming into being. It's where assholes rule, you're a serf or indentured servant, and you go to jail if you question authority or assume we still have civil rights.
- The **"NEW AMERICA"** - Protects Big Business from prosecution after stealing from you. Not a single person was prosecuted for the banking and insurance scandal that cost millions of Americans their life savings. That's the **"NEW AMERICA."**

❖ Do you remember the old motto *"America, love it or Leave It"*!, that we used to see in the 1970's and 1980's?
"New America" wants the new motto to be ***"America, Serve it or Leave It?"***

❖ ***I don't know
about you, but I'm
not built to do***

***“Servant” to any
person and damn sure
not to any
government!***

**❖ *Where do you
stand?***





Chapter 1

Better get going! “There was an awful lot to do and very little time to do it”.



“I was born a poor black child”.....Honestly, I’ve

seen pictures. I looked just like a little chimpanzee,

completely covered in black fur. Anybody that doesn't believe in the evolution theory would have a hard time explaining me, when I was born! They tell me I'm a Caucasian but I'm pretty sure it's just a vicious rumor. I've also heard that people who have a limb amputated can still feel a "shadow limb" years afterwards, I'm kind of like that. I swear even after 56 years, I can still feel a tail. I have a sneaking suspicion that the doctor removed it when I was born. This idea has been reinforced by my brothers and sisters for as long as I can remember. They told me they felt sorry for me and liberated me from the zoo when I was just born.

It was as if I knew before hand, that there was an awful lot to do and very little time to do it. I was born the third child of a fourth child in the 5th decade of this century. That surly has cosmic (or comic) significance. There is no doubt in my mind.

When I say I was in a hurry I meant it. I was born at 6 months in 1957. Just the fact that I survived was a miracle in and of itself. I was brought home to the junk yard in a shoebox one month after being born. I'm told they busted open a brand new batch of "shine", and had one hell of a shingding. Grandma said "it just made me feel all warm and fuzzy all over." When she told me this I remember hearing her voice crack and I saw her

eyes start to glisten. It just made me feel good, plain and simple.

I'll never forget how much grandma liked that batch of shine.

My family's heritage is a typical American one. You know a combination of bloodlines and stories. That same old story. It's Kiwanis Indian, Scottish, Hillbilly, Great Depression bank robber, Army general, Circus Family, Railroad Engineer, type of lineage.



My dad's family in south central Illinois is very "normal" compared to my mother's side. Flora, Illinois was, and almost still is, just like the town you see in the hit TV series "Happy Days". Saturday mornings were cartoons. Afternoons spent in Charlie Brown Park, with a hundred other kids, fishing in the city lake, having picnics, and finish the day with an ice-cream cone or cherry coke from the Tastee Freeze. Through the week everyone worked hard as farmers, mothers, bank

clerks, etc. Throughout all my travels it's the closest thing and place I've seen that personifies the American ideal and American Dream. They are to be admired and commended.

On my mother's side we have the robbers, chasing people with axes, circus family, hillbilly moonshiner, type of genes. They're all hillbillies from the hills of central Missouri. The Ozarks bred some very resilient and tough people. But they did make good looking kids (especially the women). Unfortunately you have to accept the "crazy" or "touched" gene if you want to play with that beauty. It's only transmitted through the female members of our family thank god. I have to count this as **THE FIRST BULLY** (don't worry you'll understand more about this latter).

We do have a family crest and family motto "**SIC SEMPER ENGORGEOUS NUNC**"; "**We gladly feast on those that would enslave us!**" I also have a few personal philosophies I live by:

- Never Give Up, Never Surrender.
- People are inherently good (but there are just as many assholes).
- If you have good, you have to have evil. Just like light needs dark. How would we know

what good is if we didn't. We choose which to follow.

- Free Choice is our greatest gift. Don't choose to live miserable. Life's too short. If you don't like your situation change it.
- If you missed one chance just wait.....there will be another.

My daughter says this makes me an eternal optimist. But that isn't it at all. You just refer back to rule 1. If there are problems. I don't worry about a glass being half empty or half full. I'm just thrilled to have a glass at all. More likely I'm a product of the period when I was born.....
.....

May 11, 1957

It was a spectacular spring morning in the Ozark Mountains. The valley that my mom's family lived in was

the only direct route between St. Louis and Tulsa. This was the old Route 66 highway (2



lanes, hair pin curves, and those itty-bitty silver guard-rails that you just knew would never stop you from going over the cliff if your brakes failed.

We lived on Ft. Leonard Wood Army Base 20 miles from Rolla, Missouri. My Dad was stationed there and met my mom at a skating rink in Newburg. Mom had already had 2 kids, my brother Jon and an older sister Margaret (we call her Diane, her middle name).

My Dad was a Demolition expert and was one of those guys that diffused bombs and unexploded ordinance like grenades, artillery shells, and bombs. He didn't like boring jobs either. Anyway, he was out on a job and it was Mother's Day weekend. The forecast was for it to be a brilliant day. Sunny, with a high about 73 degrees. It was absolutely perfect by anyone's standard. My Mom told me that the night before she had helped mow the

grass at her mom's in Newburg. She had decided to spend the weekend with her Mom and go to church on Sunday morning with her.

She woke up just before 5:00 a.m. to the sensation of being wet. There were birds chirping like they always do at that time of



the morning, just before the day begins. You could still smell the fresh cut grass, magnified by the dew that's always present at that time of morning.

Grandma Lucy was up fixing breakfast when my mom woke. Just like every morning she would get up at 3:00 a.m., put on the percolator, and fix my grandpa breakfast. He was an engineer for the Frisco railroad. He would leave home at 4:00 and get on his train in Newburg for a run to Springfield, or a run to St. Louis. Back then a lot of people rode trains to get from one place to another. Grandpa would drive the train 8 hours, sleep over, and another engineer would continue on. It's just like bus drivers or airline pilots... Sometimes he drove passenger trains but it was

mostly freight trains. I got to ride the train at least monthly. Grandma and my mom always seemed to need to go to town. The price was good (0.00) and the passenger cars were ok, but I really loved riding in the locomotive engine with my grandpa. But I'm getting ahead of myself. I only meant to tell you that he wasn't home that morning and that he was in Springfield, but wasn't expected back until that afternoon. One car was in St. Louis with my dad and the other was in Rolla, 10 miles away.

The thought of going into labor didn't even cross my mom's mind. After all she was just barely 6 months pregnant. No surprises this goes around. Not after the first two had already led the way. Diane was 2 and Jon was 4. By the feel of the bed, more likely Jon.

A little flash of anger crossed her brow as she threw back the sheets.....Really, pretty obvious what had happened, I mean after all, they were literally in trouble every single day. Both had quit wetting the bed, but every parent knows there are accidents... Her second thought was; how much did they have to drink before they went to bed? Too much obviously. Hell of a fine start to Mother's Day she muttered to herself. At least coffee was made. As anyone can tell you, percolating coffee cooks forever. By ten o'clock,

you could smell the distinct aroma of burnt coffee two towns over.

Her mom never ceased to



amaze her she thought, Barely 5 foot, she

survived, bubonic plague, the depression, ran a salvage yard, raised 4 kids (grandpa was always working on the railroad), and already had 12 grandkids at 42.

I kind of wish I had been out of the womb the moment she turned the light on and pulled back the covers. She did tell me that the first words out of her mouth were "Oh Shit!".....What lay under the cover wasn't a wet spot from one of the kids, it was a lake. Her water had broken in her sleep and the worse thing was she didn't even know how long ago it had happened!

Grandma picked up the story and told me that mom screamed bloody murder. She ran through the house to the back bedroom and immediately assessed the situation. You have to remember that back in that time in the hills; you very seldom went to the hospital to have a child. Most people used mid-wives, and granny had participated in more than one delivery.

This was beyond her capabilities.

No water, no contractions, it had all the earmarks of a still birth in progress or a possible miscarriage. This was a good possibility since Margaret /Mom was never very stable. The last few months had been emotionally trying with my Dad gone on frequent assignments, leaving her with 2 kids by herself. *If you had asked any of*



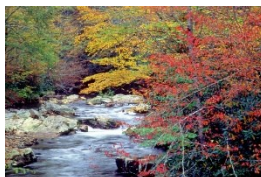
her family prior to their marriage, they would have told you she wasn't even able to take care of herself.

She loaded the kids in an old hay truck along with my mom and took off before daylight to the hospital in Rolla, 10 miles away. In the panic she didn't even pack a bag. No time.....more time.....more time....please god.....more time.

They arrived at the emergency room entrance at 6:35 a.m. Granny quickly explained the situation to the emergency room orderly as they loaded my mom on a gurney. The sun was just about to rise over the hills in the east.

All of a sudden one contraction and boo. I arrived exactly at the same moment the sun rose that day in Rolla, Missouri. 6:40 a.m.

May 11, 1957. Happy Mother's Day Mom! Watch out world.....here I come!



This is home. It was just like this the day I was born!







Chapter 2

“The Best Time
to Be Here!
The Best Time
to Be an
American!”



*America was
ready to leave
all this misery
behind and get*

Anybody born between 1957 and 1963 should consider themselves lucky. In the whole 20th Century, there were only three windows where optimism prevailed in the United States.

- 1920-1929 – After the end of World War I but before the Great Depression.
- 1957-1963 – The end of “McCarthyism”. End of Korean War. JFK elected.
- 1980 –1988 – The Beginning of Ronald Regan's 2 terms as president.



“Do you think that if a parent or town is happy or optimistic, the kids born into that town or family are happier percentage wise, than say their opposite where the kid is born into a family that poor or in a war torn area?”

For 20 years Americans, and the rest of the world for that matter, had suffered through *Black Monday* (1929).....*The Great Depression* (1930-1939).....*World War II* (1941-1945).....*The Korean War* (1949-1953). Misery, Poverty, depravation, war, for almost 24 years, physically and mentally we were exhausted.



We've always had a fierce national pride and after the end of World War II we began to realize that we were the

World's first "Super power". For the 10 years after the big war, people were hysterical about the "Red Threat" and that there was a communist under every rock and behind every bush.....
 "Die Imperialist Pigs!" Pictures were flashed across the TV Screen showing troops marching in Red Square, Nuclear Missiles; Chairman Mao in China.....threats everywhere. Charlie McCarthy hit his pinnacle in 1955 broadcasting congressional hearings in the Communist Witch hunts of that year. Most young people now do not understand how this could have happened. You have to look at it in the context of History. Before WW I and WW II we sat by and did nothing while people like Hitler and Mussolini came to power. It cost us over 2 million men's lives as a result, having to clean up that mess was harder after the fact. If we had

been proactive we might have avoided war. I don't think people like this were "evil" or just radicals. I think they honestly believed that "Defense" had to be proactive. Ignoring a problem or adversary would never happen again. In other words ***"We won't get caught with our pants down again!"***

Socially, during the period you had great films made. The two I have in mind are "Nuclear Café" and "Reefer Madness". Do you remember these two cinematic gems? Our government learned a lot from the Nazi's. Besides rockets, they gave us the first example of how propaganda and the cinema went hand in hand. They could use it to educate, influence, and promote fear and hatred.

From this, we had the birth of Psychological Operations units

introduced into the military. You've all seen hundreds off them if you're my age. My favorites were the Civil Defense films. Remember, there's a nuclear missile coming, you're in school....the alarm sounds.....and you all file calmly in the hall and then proceed to the fallout shelter. Or, scenario 2, you don't have a fallout shelter, so you crawl under a desk.....waitingwaitingwaiting..... ..



I don't think it's in the nature of Americans to feel sorry for themselves or just put up with a bad situation. Other nations have "problems", we only have solutions. By the end of 1955, as collective consciences, we decided enough was enough. It was time to get on with the business of living. Hollywood

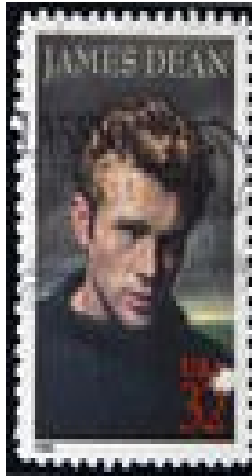
could not have scripted my entrance any better.

Elvis was a national phenomenon and "Jail House Rock" "was playing on every radio station across the US. Muscle cars, drive-ins and cruising the Dairy Queen on Main Street Friday and Saturday nights were the norm. Sock Hops were important events and you had to be there or be square. Remember? It was Happy Days!!!!!!



We lived dead center of all this on the best road in America at that time. Route 66. My aunt and Uncle had a little store right on the highway and I bet we they saw over a million Americans travel back and forth with RV's, Campers, Trucks, and every type of

automobile
imaginable. You
have to remember
this is the first time
that a common
"individual" had the
income and means
to afford luxuries
like automobiles or
RV's, for the first
time ever. By god,
they took
advantage of it.



Along with this
new four



d mobility came the
opportunities to do



things that in the
past were
unthinkable. Things
like traveling to
Yosemite and
camping if you
lived in New York
or going swimming
in the Gulf of
Mexico and you
live in Iowa. What
a totally awesome
moment to live in
the United States.

We were happy
for the first time, in
very, very, long
time.

Kids were
having a great

time. Better than ever I'm sure. Think about it. In 1945 all the soldiers came back from war. They got married and Walla, babies....babies.... and more babies. Welcome the Baby boomers. By the time I was born most of these kids were 8-10 years old.

The US had a construction boom that included a massive amount of public schools, playgrounds, and parks being built. It was the first generation to have TV, Howdy Doodie, slinky's, Red Rider BB Guns, G.I. Joe and Barbie. Hoola Hoop or Yo -Yo had national Contest. My personal favorite was Silly Putty though. How you could stick it across the Sunday morning comics, pull it back,..... and you had the picture on the putty. If that wasn't cool enough, stretch it into crazy shapes. You could make the faces long or short, fat or skinny, there wasn't any end to the

combinations. Whoever came up with that was a genius in my book!



Suburbia was created. We had to put a couple of million homes somewhere. A chicken in every pot, a car in every driveway, and everyone could be a home owner. What? No Way! There's not precedence for something like this. On a mass scale? You're crazy. It's a joke right?

IT WASN'T A JOKE. Thanks to the G.I. Bill (created for all the veterans after WWII); any American soldier could get a government financed loan for a house and property. Believe me, after World War II and Korea there were a lot of veterans. Cool, let's really stimulate the economy. People had homes; people had spare

money....happy....
happy.....happy.
(Just a little note:
this was an
example of the
"Trickle Up" theory
that politicians seem
to have forgotten).

All right back to the
story.....
.....
.....

In 1959 a little
known,
Massachusetts
senator ran against
Richard Nixon (yes
the same one that
was
impeached/resigne
d the presidency
12 years later). His
name was John
Fitzgerald
Kennedy. He was
young, dynamic,
and represented a
new younger
generation ready
to take over the
reins from the old
guard.

In the minds of
all the returning
veterans, it was this
generation of
leaders that caused
all of the misery of
the last 25 years.
Screw hatred,
screw war, screw
screwing other
people around.

Let's try
something different.
We're young, we
have resources, and

we have the
political will to
change the world.
This was the
beginning of my
generation in 1960.
Richard Nixon
represented the old
"paranoia" and the
old regime's way of
thinking. Welcome
President Kennedy
on this Wednesday,
November 3rd,
1960. We've been
waiting a long time.

On a mass scale
we wanted to make
the world a better
place. Thus, the
Peace Corps was
born. A million
volunteers sent to
every corner of the
world to help those
who could not help
themselves. Never
in modern history
had this been
attempted. It was
a response to that
famous question on
inauguration day in
January 1960 "**Ask
not what your
country can do for
you, but what you
can do for your
country**".

With all of this
happening, my
family and I
departed for
Hawaii. My dad
was to be stationed
in Honolulu for the
next three years.
So we loaded up,
moved the family to

San Francisco and boarded a cruise liner headed west. Empty Ocean for as far as the eye could see once you cleared the Golden Gate Bridge. Let's start our first adventure!



dad put the "Get it Done..... And if you're not doing the job of two people you aren't working. You're just being paid for attendance like everyone else."

Attitude Supplement
in later.



Have you asked yourselves why I spent the last 5 pages describing things that were going on at the time? It's simple really. I am sure that a kid's personality and disposition are locked in place by the time that they are three or four years old.



I totally believe that this atmosphere influenced me with a positive and can-do attitude. My

***I Was
Named After Tyrone Power –
Movie Star***

I'm probably the only white



“Tyrone” you’ll ever meet.

Chapter 3



***“Welcome to
Hawaii!
Excuse me,
Aloha!”***

w

*We get to live right
above all this for the
next three years.. How
cool is that?*

*Recess and P.E. are
spent swimming and
learning to surf down at
Waikiki Beach. The
Park is partially in view
in this photo.*

Like any good American we arrived at our first adventure on a ship. Hawaii 1960, spring (not that it matters in Hawaii), Mom was pregnant with her 5th child. It seems she's speeding up production and pumping out kids every 18 months.

So,.....down the ramp came running, a 24 year old mom, 6 months pregnant, a year old baby in her arms, I'm 2 being dragged with the other arm. Finally, bringing up the rear is my older brother and sister (4 and 6 years old).

These are kids that have been stuck on a ship for 2 weeks all the way from San Francisco. I don't think that calm and organized were adjectives in use on that morning. Controlled chaos would probably be a more appropriate description.

Now I don't know if they still do it, but back then they really did have women putting flower leis on all arriving people. Here I am just 3 years old, getting flowers and a kiss from a pretty girl just because I got there? Yep,..... I had always suspected it..... I must be special.

What do I remember about Hawaii? First, a lot of water. I remember thinking the ocean was a pretty big place. Remember Diamond Head, the extinct volcano. It was a pretty big place, too. But, then again, I remember thinking that about the ship also. Come to think of it at three years old everything is pretty big!

Why even bring up something like that? Big deal...white man! Big water.....ung. Tell that to a little kid not even three foot tall when he sees a centipede with a million legs, 4 foot long coming right for him.

Oh my God (50 years before OMG became popular).....not only was this place completely foreign but it had aliens! Hey, we watched the *"Outer Limits"*. *TV was 10 years old and we were finding out all the secrets of the universe. Or so we thought.*

We were at a city park in Honolulu next to the beach. I'm sure it was one of many Kodak moments in my life, and hilarious to boot. Here's

a four year old kid screaming about monsters, running as fast as he can, with a wild look in his eye. From a mom's point of view, how do you explain a bug, bigger than the kid to the kid? She did what any mom would do. She said *"Stay away from it or it will eat you!"* That got my attention. Now don't think too harshly of my mom. It was one of those instinctive things that mom's say just like: "You be careful with that BB gun Timmy, you'll shoot your eye out."

1961 – Started kindergarten. About time, been waiting four years. Seems like my entire life! But that ok, it's begun. I don't remember the curriculum, sorry. What I was impressed with was recess and p.e. At recess we got to go swimming in the ocean. At P.E. we had surf lessons. I know this seems a little bizarre to the average reader, but you have to understand that we were in a military school. One of the wonderful things about the 1960's and 1970's was the military dependent school system, not only taught a really superior education, but part of their responsibility was to entertain dependents overseas. More correctly, keep their butts out of trouble. Anyway, in Germany, I learned to ski in the Alps, in Panama it was scuba diving. In Hawaii it was surfing! This was because when you went into a new country first, you were isolated from the general

population of the country. Second, TV, Radio, Newspaper were in a foreign language. What does a kid do for entertainment? See my point?

The second thing that happened did not seem as important at the time. As a matter of fact, it's funny that most of the time when we were part of a historical moment, we don't even know it. We have to focus on the challenges of day to day living, without the overload of seeing the big picture, too. This was my first "moment". John F. Kennedy, newly elected President of the United States came to Hawaii right after his election to the presidency. If I remember my mom right it was just a little r and r with the family. Of course everyone on the island knew he was coming and went to the airport to meet him. My brother Jon was standing in front of my dad and I was on my dad's shoulder. We stuck our hands through the chain link fence as the first family walked by and the president shook both my brother and my hands. What a thrill.....w hat an honor!



Well, that was it for 1961 a President and Aliens, volcanoes, Surfing for entertainment. A pretty good year all in all.....What's the next one going to have? Couldn't wait to find out!

1962 didn't seem like too remarkable a year. About the only two things I can remember is my dad taking all five of us kids up to the top of Diamondhead on two separate occasions. In retrospect they were important events but to a kid not that spectacular. Especially not at 5:00 in the morning. Don't know what it is but all really special events seem to happen in the wee hours of the morning. Go figure, I guess that's why most of the world misses out on things. They're in bed.

I need to describe the first moment in a little detail before I proceed. I'm doing this because the two events happened exactly 24 hours apart. So, what I describe

applies to Saturday morning at 5:00 a.m. and Sunday morning at 5:00 a.m.

Both were exceptional mornings. A few pillowy clouds in the sky, and it were just getting light enough to make our detail. Birds were chirping, and the island was just getting ready to wake up. The temperature was comfortable as always and all of us kids had t-shirts and shorts on. Chances are we were all barefoot, too.

My dad lined us up (he was a sergeant in the military , everything was dress right dress, and cover down, 40 inches all around.....attention). Anyway, we lined up in formation and he had us do about face and point to the west. I thought...what? It was

He looked at his watch.....looked up.....looked at the watch again.....looked up. After a couple of minutes of this, he said "look up at the sky". There was a brilliant flash of light (it completely blew our night vision) and gradually, the glow receded off the back of our eyeballs. What???????????????? We got up out of bed, were literally dragged up the side of a mountain at 4:00 in the morning, and forced to stand at attention for a split second of light. Come on Dad.....that's child abuse x 5.... right?

Do you remember I told you that my dad's job in the Army was? That's right, very good. Bomb Disposal/Demolition Expert.



dark in the west. The sun rises in the east. I thought we were there to see the sun rise.

A plane had stopped At Hawaii on its way west from Los Alamos Test Range in New Mexico. He had worked on the ordinance when they made a pit stop on the island.

Have you guessed it yet?
 What would a big plane,
 coming from a military base
 in New Mexico, heading west,
 be carrying? Oh yea, it also
 makes a really, really, big
 flash of light, almost as bright
 as the
 sun.....guessed?
 Yep, at 5 years old I got to
 see a nuclear weapon
 explode.....very,
 very,.....non-exciting let
 me tell you.

Now the very next morning
 the event that occurred was
 slightly more exciting but
 bears mentioning. Like I said
 before, here my dad had all
 of us kids at the top of the
 mountain. Everything, sights,
 sounds, smells, was the same.
 We were faced west again
 and told to
 look.....
 we didn't see anything. He
 said look.....again,
 we didn't see a thing. Then
 he pointed to the ocean.

I want everyone to put
 their thinking caps on. For
 those of you are
 uncomfortable with that, a
Mickey Mouse Club hat will
 work. Let's examine the facts:

1. We're on an
 island.....
check
2. All the conditions
 are identical to the
 night
 before.....
check
3. There was a
 nuclear explosion in
 the ocean.....check

4. We all feel like
 fools.....
check
5. We want to go
 home.....
check

No, haven't guessed? We
 were getting to witness a
"Tsunami". Otherwise known
 as a *Tidal Wave*. The nuke
 blast caused a tremendous
 wave to be formed 800 miles
 west of the island. It took 24
 hours for the wave to hit us.
 Most people don't know that
 a tidal wave gets its name
 from mimicking the tidal
 action of water (i.e. the way
 it does in and comes out, you
 know "the tide").

We first identified the
 wave about 2 miles out and
 west of the island. It was
 unimpressive. Shoot, even at
 5 years old I had ridden
 waves that tall. It was only
 about 4 foot tall from the
 looks of it and it stretched
 clear across the horizon as the
 sun rose. It hit the island and
 passed
 by.....so
 what.....Didn't see
 what people got so excited
 about. Paint drying was
 more interesting.

Atten.....tion! My dad barked AN ORDER and said "about face". We all turned to the east this time. The sun was just up over the ocean but had risen. As the wave past and kept going east, it sucked all of the water away from the island. Now when I SAY IT SUCKED THE WATER AWAY....IT SUCKED THE WATER AWAY. For two or three miles east of Oahu, for as far as the eye could see the ocean was gone.....just gone. We could see fish flopping around on the ocean floor, reefs, and everything else normally hidden by water.



I wonder how much that water weighed. Millions of gallons for as far as the eye could see. How much force is that when it comes rushing back? That's the tidal wave. When it came back, all at once.....KA-BOOM. That destructive force was something to see. Anyway that ended 1962.

Chapter 4

A Very Bad Year!"

It was the close of 1962, NEW YEAR'S EVE, and the beginning of 1963. Our parents allowed us to stay up and ring in the New Year. We had bottle rockets, and fire crackers galore. My dad liked things that went boom. Go figure. . At the end of the night we knew he would set off two or three parachute flares. You've seen them in all the old military/war movies. The soldier shoots the flare in the air and it comes down slowly on a parachute while a machine gun is firing.....tat.....tat.....tattat.....we loved 'em.

Now my brother and I had frequent flyer miles at the hospital dispensary. It was kind of like an "Urgent Care" place of today. We were always getting hurt and stitched up. No parental abuse, no beatings, just rough house fun. It was still allowed back then. You were allowed to go outside and be a kid. A few of the kids I've seen should learn from that.

Anyway, the doctor told my mom that between us we had more stitches than Frankenstein. He's probably right.

On this particular night I was wearing a new turtle neck sweater. They were all the rage in the early 1960's. It was white and beautiful and I'd just gotten it for Christmas. I felt "regal".

Have you ever had an idea that the split second after you had it, you knew it was a bad idea? How about a very bad idea? Then you turned around and did it? Nowadays, we call it a "brain fart". This was the first of many stupid moments in my life.

Forest Gump would have said "Stupid Is as Stupid Does." Well what I "does" was stupid. My brother and I had the brilliant idea of having a rocket battle with the bottle rockets we were supposed to shoot off later that night.

At first we were prudent and hid behind objects as we shot at each other. Man, the bottle rockets were swooshing over my head just like in real war. I loved it. After a couple of minutes we got braver. Soon we didn't need to hide behind anything. We were Army soldiers.....we WERE G.I. Joe.

Then it happened. My brother took aim with a rocket....lit the

fuse.....and took careful aim. It was the shot of the century. Dead center of my chest and I didn't see it coming. The bottle rocket caught in the sweater and started melting the nylon. I started slapping at my chest like a Wildman and my brother started laughing so hard he fell to his knees.

The bottle rocket had melted a hole the size of a baseball dead center of my chest. The sweater was ruined. My brother saw it and I think we both realized at the same time*"Oh.....you in trouble.....you're going to get your ass beat.....He's(the other one) going to tell. What do you do? Mom knew I had it on. The only solution was to hide the hole.*

How do you hide the hole in the center of a new sweater? Why you re-knit it of course. I didn't have any white yarn or any color yarn for that matter. So I used the only thing available to a kid.....kite string! It was the same color, almost the same texture and size.....yea, it would work. Have you ever seen a six year old try to knit? It had to be hilarious. Bottom line is we both got our butts beat. I did get the satisfaction of seeing my brother get his last. Misery loves company. He's my brotherawwww.....I'm sorry he got in trouble.....not! I did learn to knit later on. Now

that I'm thinking about it, I WONDER IF THAT WAS A SUB-CONSCIENCE ATTEMPT TO RECTIFY THIS INCIDENT.

Less than 2 weeks later I was back in the emergency room getting my stomach pumped out. Somehow, some way, I had gotten into a box of rat poison and decided to try some. I'm told I ate the whole box but I don't know that for a fact.

I didn't die. Don't know why, .Doctor said I "ate enough to kill a horse". Here was the *Second Bullitt*. I do have a name for these by the way. I call them *"Close Encounters of the baaaaadd kind"*.

Not three months later I was back in the emergency room again! My brother and I were wrestling in our bedroom one night. We were on the top bunk of our bunk beds fighting as usual. I don't remember what about, but I'm sure it was some form of torture. His favorite was holding you down and letting spit slowly come out his mouth. Sometimes he could suck it back and other times he couldn't. Who knows? On this specific occasion somehow, some way, I managed to fall off the bunk with a plastic spoon in my hand.

I remember having the wind knocked out of me but then felt a pain in my throat

and mouth. It didn't take long to taste blood. By this time I was well aware of its coppery taste, smell and unique properties. I had managed to stick the end of the spoon through the bottom of my mouth, around the tongue, and up into the roof of my mouth... For the first time in my life I didn't have a single thing to say. I thought it though. Do you know what it was? That's right.....Awww.....you're in trouble.....I'm going to tell and you're going to get your butt beat! As predictable as a puppy shitting 10 minutes after it eats.

So there I was impaled, couldn't cry because it hurt too much. It was back to the hospital again. Doc said another 1/4 inch and it would have passed through the sinus cavity and hit the brain. ^{3rd} *Bullitt*. Of course I didn't die again. But I was using up my nine lives awful quick.

- You would think that this would be enough for one year right. Not in my life....no way. When I tell people about the next incident they freak.

Let me set this up and paint the proper picture in your head. First, it's Sunday night about 7:00 in the evening. All five kids are sitting on the floor in front of the T.V. watching Walt Disney.

It's right at dusk. You could hear crickets outside though the screen door. A cool breeze was blowing and everything is tranquil and serene. Dinner is done, the dishes are washed.....y ou finally get to relax.

Crash.....front door slams open so loud it sounds like a gun. Kids start screaming. A man enters the doorway with a large bloodstain on the front of his shirt. The blood stain getting bigger and bigger by the second,.....He turned, staggered, and fell on me. I don't think I could have moved any faster if I had been shot myself. I scrambled out from underneath him and stood up staring with all my brothers and sisters.

There was a man bleeding to death on our living room floor. How bizarre. Can't be happening right? Oh it was alright. After a minute the military police came running into the house. We found out that the guy had raped a girl and they had shot him while trying to apprehend him. It was sheer bad luck that he fell through our living room screen door that night. Tell

me that won't give you a few nightmares as a little kid.

AS much as I would like to, I still can't finished out the year. I really, really wish it wasn't so. I cried, my dad cried, I think every American cried.

I honestly don't know if things are the same in grade schools today as they were then. Back then the first thing you did in the morning was say the Pledge of Allegiance. You know it:

I Pledge Allegiance to the flag

Of the United States of America

And to the Republic for which it Stands

One nation, Under God, Indivisible

With Liberty and Justice for All.

The National Anthem or the Stars & Stripes all create the same feeling in me. For as long as I can remember. I don't really know if anyone else has it. I get goose bumps on my arms and a swelling of pride. It's close to the same as when my daughter was born or when I feel I'm on the right wavelength with the almighty.

I also see it as a "psychic connection/maybe even a very, very narrow wavelength of energy. It's thin, that its damn near impossible to find, and if you do find it you can't keep the signal in. But when

you do tap into it; it's glorious. In my own minds eye I call it the Humanity Signal. It's the same thing that makes us donate after a disaster, feel compassion for someone, and get in touch with god. I think that when we do "tune in"; we are the true definition of "Human". It's when anything is possible.....think itDo It! No Boundaries. Have you ever had it? Ever been able to keep ahold of it for other than a moment? Do you try to get it back as soon as it evaporates?Why?

I think that somehow, someway, we all tuned in together as a nation in the early 1960's. We had pretty good reason. No other nation was as strong, as morally right, or as dedicated to "truth, justice, and the American Way." We were going to change the world. Even to this day when I sing the National Anthem or say the Pledge of Allegiance, I get the goose bumps. 50 years later, it's incredible.

I have a 13 year old grandson and I asked him today what he thought about both. His response was obvious. It was something he was forced to do but didn't really believe. He's never felt any real pride at being an American.

It's not hard to understand why. What have we done as a nation in the last 20 years to be proud of? Nothing in

his lifetime for sure. Nothing since Regan. Why do we have the right to expect them to be proud when our generation hasn't done anything to make them proud? Think about it!



Yep, closed out the year with the assassination of the president I had shaken hands with earlier that year. Glad to close the door on that year. Camelot and hope had died in America. The next 10 years reaped the fruits of that labor.



Chapter 5

“The Pendulum breaks and Chaos Rules”

One of the great things about the United States and one of the ways that it has been able to survive for over 200 years is that it represents everyone and every interest in one way or another. It really does! The average Joe nor the rich and almighty will agree with that statement. That’s because in a democracy nobody gets 100% of what they want, they can’t. Not everyone wants the same thing. If they did, communism would work and we would all be one big happy ant farm. What democracy TRULY MEANS, is that we all recognize that we are different. We all have different things we want and need. If I hope to get what I want, I’d better be willing for you to hope for the same. Compromise, authoritarian rule, dictatorship, or ant farm, these are the points of the pendulum in my mind.

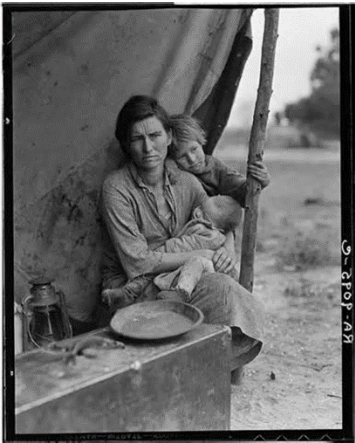
How the Pendulum Swings

Far
Left.....Center...
.....FarRight

Liberal	Compromise
Conservative	Authoritarian
Dictatorship	

/-1930’s--1950’s-----/-----
1960’s-----1990’s-----
2010-----

VeryPoor./..Poor....MiddleClass
s
..UpperMiddleClass.....Rich.....



Back in the 1930’s the majority of Americans were very poor, and we needed social programs and help from the government, to get us back on track. History introduced us to Roosevelt and the “New Deal”, C.C.C., and the WPA. They helped us no doubt, but who pays for them to run long term? Welcome to income

taxes. The next question was "who has the money?" We hit up the rich through taxes, loophole closings, etc.

A good war or two stimulated the economy through the 40's and 50's, and the pendulum swung from far left to the center. More Americans became wealthy and were taxed more heavily in the late 50's and early 60's. These previously poor became middle class, then advance to wealthy/conservative.....and the cycle continues today. As we accumulate possessions and wealth we become more conservative and want to guard what we have from all the rest. The more we get, the more radical we become, in trying to protect it. So, you can see that throughout the 1970's to today, the pendulum has kept swinging farther and farther right. It hasn't been this far right since the mid-1960. Personally, I think that if it doesn't start to swing back soon, we will see a revolution of some type.....
.....

I apologize for the mini history lesson but it was necessary for you to understand my analogy before continuing. As the pendulum swings through a cycle it serves the needs of each group. I picture it like a giant feeder that rotates back and forth. At each click forward it dispenses a food pellet to whatever group is directly below it. Click....drop.....click....drop

....click....drop. Each group gets enough to keep it alive and part of the whole, but never enough to leave out on its own. So each group gets some of what it wants, but never all of it. It feels more special at the ends of the left and right cycles, because these groups get feed, twice as much as the center. The center is apathetic most of the time to how the pendulum is swinging because it's not fed by it very often. It sees its "friends" on the fringes being fed initially so it's ok. But, as time goes on, the "Center" is supposed to become more and more alienated, forcing the pendulum away from whatever "extreme" (left or right), and back toward the center. Unfortunately, whatever direction it is forced in, it never stops at the center. It continues creeping in that direction until it again becomes unbearable to the center and is forced into another cycle. I

I know it's pretty audacious of me to put the complete book of college Political Science 101 and 102 in a one paragraph synopsis, but there it is. That's the advantage of being an author! The big question that the rest of the world can't seem to figure out is how the United States is able to do this peacefully, without civil unrest, riots, and a lot of bloodshed.

Have you ever wondered how fledgling democracies that we have set up all over the world seem destined to fail

more likely than not? Yet, we keep pouring billions and billions of dollars into it, in an attempt to “make it happen”; over and over again? To me it seems so obvious:

Places like the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia, are NOT inherently bad nor are the people. Places where people have been poor FOREVER, because of kings, dictators, tyrants, domineering military governments, or whatever, it doesn't matter, have turned to religion because it was the only means to ease their plight and suffering. These governments or their equivalents have taken away everything else from these people. Religion is impossible to take away. How do you take away something intangible? Now how sacred do you think that would be to them? How difficult would it be to try to take it away or alter it, or even claim that your view is better than theirs? Let a Catholic tell an American Baptist, he/she doesn't know what they are talking about. Not only that, but they “WILL CONFORM” and convert to their brand Christianity or else. Demand something and you have begun the first step in a confrontation. Offer nothing in return and it doesn't matter who is in power, fighting will start, civil war is the end. What was it Abraham Lincoln said: “A House Divided cannot stand?” Extremism is the epitome of a “house divided.”

The poor people of third world countries have never truly experienced, over a long period (say more than 20 or 30 years) the benefit of feeding from the government feeder. It always been empty. So there isn't any trust. Why should there be. Trust is earned no matter what the culture.



What are the logical end results:

Poor people have nothing to lose by fighting. Most of the time it's their only doorway to something better.

The people in Second and Third world countries have **no faith** in government institutions of any kind.

The government hopper in these countries might exist, but it has always been empty. They've heard promises for a thousand years. These governments promise a better life but the reality is “**better for whom.**”

In many religions, especially Islam, factions have been fighting back and forth for over a thousand years. What gives us the audacity to believe that we have the capability to change things or that we even have the right to do so? It's no wonder; the rest of the world hates us. We stopped "helping" and started ordering countries after the fall of the old Soviet Union. Speaking of the old USSR, funny how we've forgotten that they, a superpower were unable to change things in Afghanistan (their physical neighbor), after 20 years of fighting and occupation. Yet, we can go in and change things overnight. Funny, overnight is 12 years and counting.



The Middle Class, the Government, and the Ruling Class, all have nothing to gain at the beginning of a democracy. If it's not in their best interest, then why support it? The U.S. model worked because we were all poor, with a very small upper class. Plus, we had resources that others didn't or don't have.

The bottom line is that when you have these kinds of barriers fledgling democracies don't stand a very good chance of

succeeding. The democratic pendulum had to swing slowly so that everyone is fed "enough" to be content. If it jumps from one end to the other, everyone in the middle is skipped and then left out. If no one is happy at all how can it work?

The pendulum in the United States, like I said before, is pretty predictable and cyclical. In the 20th century it jumped in 1931. The next big jump was 1964. Boy, was this a big one. It was big enough to affect my generation and probably every generation that will come after. I had a very unique perspective that most didn't get.

Finally, we get to move on.....
.....



Now I know that I've done a lot of blabbering, but do you remember me talking about us leaving for Hawaii in 1960? Puff the Magic dragon playing, Crew Cuts and muscle cars with everyone going to the drive-in on Friday or Saturday night, cruising main street, and making out in the drive-in or in the back seat on a country road?, Your alternative was greasers on



motorcycles, farm boys, or a small group calling themselves "Beatniks".

Culture and style changes, are more apparent to military brats. By leaving the country for three or four years at a time, we see changes all at once instead of gradually, like most people. We were more cognizant of these changes as kids. No matter where we moved, by the time we came back to the states, our clothing, knowledge of television shows, etc. were "behind the times and old fashioned". Try being the "new kid", already a stranger and looking like a



nerd or that you were without a clue. Makes you tough, I'll give it that.

So, here we are in 1964. President Kennedy had just been assassinated; Music has gone from sweet puff the magic dragon to Bob Dylan and anti-war protest music. Protests, hippies, a lot of hatred for the military,

drugs,.....pure chaos and it seemed to infect the entire country.....How was this possible in just four years? Needless to say, we were all freaked.



few months, we went from a nation of "WE CAN" to a nation ofwe can't.....
The hopes of a nation died in Dallas in 1964 thanks to a few who decided their way was the only way. "We, the People" became "them the followers". We *still* are.....no matter how much anyone tells you different.

We arrived in San Francisco in December of 1964. Welcome Home!



The pendulum hadn't skipped a few slots; it jumped all the way over from the far left to the far right. In just a

Chapter 6

Where did America Go?

Even after almost 50 years, it still amazes me how much this country changed almost overnight. We arrived in San Francisco in 1965 and had to wait in the city overnight, for our grandmother to arrive from Missouri. She was bringing an F-150 pickup with the old type camper attached. It was the one that had the bed that sat over the cab of the truck. You still see some of them today but not very many. But then again, trucks really aren't trucks anymore are they? For a bunch of kids it was the coolest thing ever to go across country with. Much better than how we usually traveled, all crammed into the back of a station wagon. Since my dad was in the military, we were able to stay overnight in temporary housing on the Presidio of San Francisco. I didn't know that I would be stationed there 20 years later.

Now the Presidio is located on the best piece of property in the whole San Francisco bay area. It sits directly over the Golden Gate Bridge on the south side of the bridge. You can look down and see all of San Francisco and the Golden Gate traffic at the same time. It's something to see as an adult, but even more impressive as a kid.

Since we had to stay the night, my dad decided to bring all of us down to Fisherman's Wharf and the Golden Gate Park that runs along the bay up toward the presidio. I thought the "Outer Limits" was bizarre and scary, but it didn't have anything on downtown San Francisco in 1965. We had aliens from a different planet in white sheets and bald. They walked around chanting and selling pencils. What was Hare Krishna, hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, hare hare anyway? But, they were beat out in the "weird" category by the open gays who walked around and kissed each other in public. In 1965? No Way. Then you had the free love hippies and finally the anti-war protestors. When we left, everyone had crew cuts and was happy, now almost overnight, everyone was pissed off, and nobody listened to one another. We learned it all in 24 hours, in probably the only place where all of these groups merged in one large city. It was incredible to see! If you had bet me that exactly 10 years later that I would be getting married in the Peruvian Embassy, at the height of the disco/cocaine bar scene, there in San Francisco, I would have bet you, a million dollars it wasn't so. I would have lost that million by the way.

Granny finally arrived the next afternoon and away we went toward Missouri and

home. This trip would be one of a kind. We didn't know it at the time but all of us kids would nearly die, in less than 12 hours. It wasn't a near miss car wreck or anything "normal" like that. You're not going to believe it when I tell you.

It took about 8 hours to get through the valley and above Bakersfield through the Tehachapi Pass. This is the pass through the mountains that separates the desert from the fertile green valley on the west side of the mountains between California and Arizona. Any one that has headed west on old Route 66 now I-40 knows what I'm talking about. After riding 24 hours through desert you climb up into the mountains and all of a sudden there it is. It's like a post card, green and beautiful with planted fields as far as the eye can see. From the minds point of view, it's a real Kodak moment.

We were headed east through the same pass. What you get to see from that direction, is desert forever. Believe me, once you've seen one arroyo cactus you've seen them all. From us kids it was pretty boring after the first hour.

Most of the time there are unlimited opportunities to get into trouble when you're a kid. Multiply that times 6 (for 6 kids), squared (to account for synergy: Everyone knows that six kids brains are

unlimited, in the amount of bad ideas they can create out of thin air). Under most circumstances these ideas are not acted on. But, have 5 others egging you on and "Presto, changeo.....Yo u're all in bad trouble.

San Francisco to Barstow was 16 hours back then, if (and it was a big "if") you traveled non-stop. They had rest areas every 40 or 50 miles but back then a rest area was a dirt pull off with a canopied picnic table or two, a few shrubs, and a fence with cows on the other side. This was better than the Hilton as far as we were concerned. We would stop and be released from prison. Believe me any room that we were trapped in together and couldn't escape was prison. That is exactly what the back of the camper was. It was totally cool and prison at the same time. Anyway, release, then ghetto steak sandwiches (i.e. bologna/no cheese with mustard because it didn't need refrigerated was a staple for 15 years. We probably ate thousands each on road trips to the end of the earth over the years.), some kool-aid, and we were good to go. At the rest area on the east side of Barstow it was late afternoon and we stopped for dinner. Grandma had made a pot of chili at home and brought it with her. I remember well, we had chili and peanut butter and honey sandwiches.

What a treat. We were just like white people. Uh...Rah!

Our dad decided to go ahead and take a break there. The adults were tired and all three took a nap in the back of the camper until well after dark. Granny had made pallets and we were camping out under the stars. I can't describe the number of stars you can see in the desert. It's truly humbling.

I think I still have vampire nightmares from that night every once in a while. I remember waking up weak from loss of blood about midnight. Naturally, all the other kids woke up and found out that we were all in the same boat. Suddenly you had 6 kids, some screaming, some crying, but all participating in the chaos only a large family can create when kids go wild.

You would expect it in Minnesota. You would know it was coming in Louisiana and Mississippi. Swamps have 'em..... Beaches have 'em.....lakes and rivers have 'em. But who in their right mind would expect the desert to have them? Have you guessed yet? Yep, mosquitos.....and not just any mosquitos.....we are talking about little bastards that wear little leather helmets and fly in formation. They were more ruthless than a Nazi concentration camp guard. Who would have figured? I've worked in the jungles of southeast Asia and

Latin America, lived in Louisiana and along the beaches of Florida and Mississippi, and let me tell you, I have never to this day, ever, been attacked by mosquitos the way we were there in the desert about 11:00 at night. It was vicious



It wasn't just one or two. It was a swarm of millions. We packed in a panic and rush and took off from there in less than 10 minutes. Not bad. I swear we didn't crack a window until daybreak as a result of all this. It didn't matter how hot it got. Actually, the problem is the opposite in the desert. It gets really, really, cold so having the windows closed wasn't a problem.

Things probably calmed down around 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. By that time the itching had stopped and we were all so tired we couldn't stay up any longer. We all slept.....until.....
.....
.....
.....BLAT.....BLAT.....b
lat.....blat.....blat . It was our oldest brother Jon. He let the worst fart rip that

you have ever smelled. It was obscene. It is his personal gift in life by the way. It was so bad it woke us up. I don't know but it was about 10:00 in the morning and we were almost out of Arizona and entering into New Mexico. We scrambled for the windows and he laughed and laughed. Called us woos'es and told us we weren't tough enough.

You as the reader need to be aware that competition is the lifeblood of my family. It doesn't matter what it was, running, darts, dropping turds, didn't matter, *"anything you can do I can do better, I can do anything better than you.....no you can't.....yes, I can.....no you can't.....yes, I can".....*you know the song. That was pretty much our family's guiding philosophy. That was combined with "If you're not doing the job of two people you are not working, because the majority of people don't work but only attend life and work. You don't have any idea how much I've appreciated this gift from my grandmother and father throughout my life!!!!

Anyway, we stopped rolling down the windows and decided as a group to show him we could tough it out. The odor drifted but it must have taken 10 or 15 minutes at least. That was all right. The chili had allowed us to load for bear also. So, what dear brother had coming was

his "outburst" x 5 combined with the taunts from all of us at the same time. We had quickly learned that the big and strong could be brought to their knees by superior/inferior forces if we combined our resources in a single attack. It had worked many times in the past with our parents.

We aimed and fired. It probably wasn't so but I remember the sound being deafening. I still remember it. My older sister and I went for the big gun....blat....blat approach....were you're butt lips fibrate like your trying to blow on a bugle.....come on you know the sound; that was just to get his attention. Call it a diversion if you will. Candy, Amber, and Lisa (being more feminine) went with SBD's. (The military loves their acronyms). That stands for "Silent **but** Deadly". This method was less "confrontational" but none the less effective in its own right. He didn't stand a chance. You have to give him credit though. He hung in there for at least an hour maybe an hour and a half of this abuse.

Have you ever heard the expression that if you put a frog in hot water it will hop right out but, if you put that frog in cold water and slowly raise the temperature of the water, the frog will actually boil to death instead of

hopping out? I think that might be true.

By noon, our parents stopped once we entered New Mexico. Again, it was a roadside picnic area, but it was special because it did have a cinder block toilet facility. This was first class as far as the girls were concerned. We boys had less requirements or expectations if you know what I mean.

When my dad opened the door it was at least 130 maybe 140 degrees in the camper. My dad told me later that we all looked like we were nearly dead. Sweating, and quite to the point of being lethargic. He said it scared the hell out of him. Just think about it. Seeing all six of your kids just lying there staring at you... no crying...no laughing.....no noise.....nothing. I laugh now but it must have been a real shock to him poor guy.

None of us had been willing to give up and crack a window no matter what. That's how much beating the other meant to every one of us. Needless to say that after our parents got over the relief of knowing that we weren't going to die, we got



our
asses
beat.
This was

deserved as always and no one was spared.

The rest of the trip was uneventful and we arrived in Missouri in good shape and fully recovered. We were none the worse for wear, and every one of us was ready to start a new adventure.

Chapter 7

“Almost Normal”



We only stayed a few months at Grandma Lucy's in Springfield, Mo while my dad got settled in Fort Leonard Wood. When we had left grandma and grandpa had lived in Newburg, a little town on Route 66 between Rolla and Waynesville. When we returned they had moved to Springfield. This was a pretty good size city, the third largest in Missouri.

Living in a city was cool but that wasn't the best part. They had built A&W Root Beer and a McDonald's right across the street less than 50 yards away. Now that was heaven in the 60's. No doubt about it.



Up the hill less than a block away was a Consumer's grocery store and a bowling alley. Right behind her house was woods and a field. It was perfection, in kid's eyes. It had everything but the movie theater. God I loved that place! She kept it for the next 30 years and it became sanctuary for all of us grandkids at more than one time though out our lives.

My older brother would mow yards to make money and my older sister would lean house or extort money from us. Me and my younger sisters made our money by collecting soda bottles and bringing them us to Consumers. They would pay us 5 cents per bottle. So, three bottles equalled one



small root beer or one

hamburger, your choice. I bet we collected 20-30 per day from the neighborhood easy. Funny, I never thought about it but we started recycling for

money all the way back to
1965. Hmmmmmm.....

It was still late summer
and my dad got orders for
Vietnam. Remember, he was
a demolition expert. Plus, at
5 ft. tall he was perfect for
going into Viet Cong bunkers
and tunnels and defuses
booby traps or other
explosives. They were also
the people that blew up
confiscated enemy munitions
in place. The war was just
getting started but his job
was always one of the first to
be deployed.

My mom didn't really like
her mom much and after 6
months, we had over stayed
our welcome. It was decided
that we would move to south-
central Illinois, to a little town
called Flora, about 100 miles
due east of St. Louis in Illinois.
This was where all the
Glassford's lived whereas;
the Jackson's lived in Missouri.

We would stay with my
Grandma Goldie. Now, I
could right an entire book just
on her life. Both my
grandmothers were
impressive and very strong
women. But their skills were
complexly different. These
differences would make us
kids who we are today.

Very quickly, Grandma
Goldie was 4'10, and skinny
as a rail. I don't think she
ever broke 100 pound in her
life. She married my

grandpa Glass ford at 14
and by 17 had three boys.
My father was the youngest
born in 1933, dead center of
the worst depression in United
States history. Grandpa
Glassford also worked for the
railroad like Grandpa
Jackson but it was a different
railroad and he worked in the
switch yard.

My dad never got to meet
his dad. He was run over by
a train and killed 2 months
before my dad was born.
Talk about bad luck. But, in
the 1930's, industrial
accidents were the norm not
the uncommon thing it is
today. So, here was
grandma, pregnant, with 2
kids, in the middle of a
depression, a widow now to
boot. Never give up, never
surrender, that my motto and
our motto as a family. The
old girl had my dad, raised
them very well, with all the
boys happy and loving life,
moral, and honest, and with
great work ethics. It all came
from her, to them, and finally
to us. Bless you Grandma
where ever you are!

We heard stories of how
hard it was through those 10
years between 1930 and
1940. She pulled it off not
well but very well. She had
one other attribute that she
handed down. That was the
need for education. None of
her kids or grandkids would
be slackers when it came to
education. That didn't mean
you had to have a degree. It

meant you learned something every single day of your life. That didn't mean that you sat in front of a TV. That didn't count. If you stayed with her for the summer or whatever, you read one book a week, no exceptions (I now read 1200 word a minute most of the time). If you didn't, you are slacking off and not helping, doing, or thinking, you are just existing, and that is never acceptable. By the way did I mention that this little widow woman was one of the most powerful Illinois Democratic Party leaders in southern Illinois in a time when you had the Teamsters, other unions, and a democratic political machine that was second to none in that time. Not bad.....it's no wonder where we get that side of our personalities from.

In late 1965 we left Springfield and moved to Flora. We expected to be there a year, because that was the tour of duty time in a war zone back then. So, after a year, our dad would be back and we would be stationed somewhere else. **IT DIDN'T QUITE WORK OUT THE WAY WE PLANNED.**

Police Dispatcher:

*Your mother did
what.....?*

*You're
where.....
.....?*

*How
many.....
.....?.....How
Many?.....Oh my God.*

*Where's your
father.....?....
.....he's
where?.....Oh my God.*

*Are there any adults
there.....How long have you
been there alone?.....Oh my
God.*

*A car will be there in a few
minutes.....dispatcher hangs
up.*

It was a beautiful spring Saturday in Flora in April of 1966. The kind of day where you were glad to be alive, because the day was perfect. We had a house about 20 minutes' walk though residential areas to Main Street and the movie theater.

When we had got home after waiting an hour for my mom to show up at the end of the movie (she didn't), we waited patiently until dark. By the time it got dark my

They had tracked down Grandma Goldie somewhere and she came to pick us up with Aunt Susan. From this point forward I'll refer to my real mother as Margaret, you'll



older brother started to get worried. By 8:00 our older brother wasn't able to get hold of anyone so he called the police. Shoot there just wasn't anyway to know what happened. Had there been a

understand more lately. Margaret didn't come home that night. She didn't come home the next night either. Matter of fact she didn't come home at all, ever.



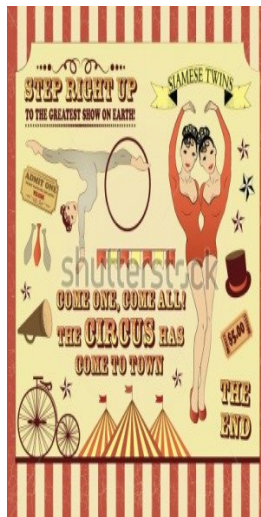
car wreck? Was she with Grandma Goldie

somewhere? Was Grandma Goldie ill? No one could be contacted. The city police showed up and listened as my brother told the story. He loaded all of us up and put us in the cop car. He brought us to the police station, sat us down until he contacted someone about forever later.



Honest to god, no bullshit, absolute truth, you are not going to believe this. It is not.....I repeat.....not a cliché. My mother, Margaret Louise Glassford, at 29 years old.....left 5 kids at the movie theater on

Saturday morning, was supposed to be back at 2:00, *never came back*, never looked back, abandoned all five of us,.....and joined **Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus**.



That's right our mother left us and joined the circus. We didn't find that out until almost a year and a half later. Grandma Jackson slipped up and told my dad. Our dad had to be pulled from Vietnam on emergency leave through the Red Cross, because you couldn't just leave five kids alone at that time. My dad did find out later that his replacement during his absence was killed in an ambush, inside a VC tunnel, during a routine mission. Who knows, Margaret might have saved his life inadvertently. I

always figured she did me a favor by leaving. The woman committed herself into an asylum for 4 years just 2 years after she left us. She was/is truly touched or full blown crazy. I'm not sure which. I just couldn't imagine what my life might have been like if she had stuck around. Different for sure. Like I said before, other than birth, her leaving was the best gift she could have given any of us.



Chapter 8

“I meet the most important woman in my life...at 9 years old.”



Our Dad had a White “62 like this. It’s the first car I

My dad was in limbo as far as the military was concerned. When a soldier is in this type of situation he’s given a temporary assignment until they can figure out what to do with him. In his case, he was put in charge of the officer’s club in Granite City, Illinois. It wasn’t a normal army base but a munitions facility, where munitions were sent by train to the west coast and shipped to Vietnam.

He had a natural knack for the job. He was one of those people who never met a stranger. I swear we could be in the middle of nowhere, a town with a population of 12 and he would find someone he knew, even though he had never been there before in his life. As a matter of fact, that was what he did his last 10 years in the Army.

My dad was 35 and pretty worldly by this time. He had a cocktail waitress working at the club when he took over. Her name was Sharron and she was 18, Irish, and tough. She was the only daughter of 6 kids, and 2 of her brothers were Navy Seals and 2 others worked for the Steel Mill. Later she would tell me stories about having to carry razor blades in her bra when she went to school in case the black girls wanted to pick a fight. Bizarre, but it was an inner-city school in the 1960's, nothing like what we experienced in military schools.

They hadn't worked together for 6 months before my dad got orders to go to Germany. He was going to run an officer's club in Karlsruhe, Germany. Karlsruhe was about 50 miles south of Munich or Frankfurt. Even though it was against the rules they had been dating for a couple of months at this point.

Now my dad had a bad decision to make (one I would have to make later in life too!). Not going was not an option. They call that desertion. You can be shot for that during war time, and it was war time. The second

option was to leave the kids for 3 years with Grandma Lucy or Grandma Goldie. He couldn't bring us without a spouse to take care of us in case he was deployed, or the Russians attacked (he was going to Europe during the Cold War), or for whatever reason. Makes sense if you ask me.



Our Dad had a white '62. It spoiled me on convertibles, the rest of my life.

You want to have your ego stroked. Have a car with your initials on it.

Then there was a third and last option. He could get married. He had three months before a decision had to be made. Talk about stress. When I asked him about it years later he told me that diffusing bombs was nothing compared to that.

I still remember the first time I met Sharron. We still laugh about it today. We were living in Fort Leonard Wood in military housing and Grandma Goldie was keeping us while my dad worked through the week in Granite City 100 miles away. After a couple of months of

secret dating and more, my Dad brought her home to meet the kids for the first time.

It could have been yesterday. We lived at the end of a Cull de Sac. Our back yard ended up in the woods which separated different housing areas. I was playing marbles with the neighbor 2 houses down, in his back yard. It was Saturday morning, I would guess about 10:00. Brian and I were seriously concentrating on the game. I could be wrong but the stakes were 2 clearies, 6 assorted cat eyes, and 2 huge boulders. Too expensive to stop and come meet some woman when my dad called for me. I refused to stop. I could see both of them but, it didn't matter. After a year of being pretty much alone (grandma, bless her heart, couldn't keep an eye on us all the time at her age) we were all pretty cocky and independent.

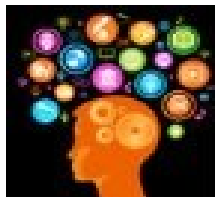
Sharron wasn't impressed. Number one, she was tough. She didn't take this nonsense from a nine year old. Second, she knew kids. She knew she had to set a precedent right off the bat as far as who had the power and authority. Later would be more difficult. Especially, when you look at the fact that there were 5 kids, and the older two (who she had already met) obviously were going to resent her (the old "your trying to take the place

of my mother syndrome").

Jon was 13 just 5 years younger than herself, and Diane was 11. Diane always hated her from the git-go. I was next at nine years old. I was the perfect one to set an example with.

Brian and I were kneeling, but I could see "that woman" approaching out of the corner of my eye. I wasn't worried. None of my brothers or sisters could catch me nor any of my friends. As a matter of fact, no one had ever caught me when I sat my mind to it. Arrogant at nine years old, but that was soon about to change.

Slowly and I thought discreetly, I started to pick up all my marbles and put them in my pocket. She was still about 10 feet away when I finished. I thought I judged her abilities pretty well and right in mid-stride, I jumped up and took off. Now the method most effective for me in the past was to run at 90 degrees then cut hard away and



accelerate.

The 90 went all right, and I was well into the straight away and gaining speed....I looked over my shoulder and didn't see anything. The

Crime Magazine and other detective rags that she had lying around her apartment. I was freaked by Charlie Manson and the Tate-LA Bianca Murders in California and the normal looking Ted Bundy. Serial killers of the 1960's were just a reflection of how badly things had deteriorated in America at that time.

I brought this up because I want the reader to understand 2 points here. First, that it was the first time that I remember finding myself curious about how screwed up humans could be and that I wanted to understand the why but not the emotion attached to it. Second, that I understood that there were just as many (maybe more) bizarre people in the world than normal people. Better to be aware of this fact than unaware.

Let's not forget that the clock was ticking during this period and that it was quickly running out. With less than a week to make a decision my dad and Sharron got married in Arkansas over the weekend. No family, no witnesses, just married. In less than 4 weeks we were on our way to Europe as a new family. Not exactly the Brady Bunch but hell they

hadn't even been created yet.

So another adventure begins.....
.....Off to Europe

Chapter 9

"Having my eyes opened to the world."

If you had a choice when setting up your life when would you fill in the slot for world travel? Most people pick their late teens or early 20's, I would think. I would understand it but I wouldn't agree with it.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the best age is 10-13 years old. This is the age where we first become social animals and old enough to understand what we are seeing for the first time. Plus, we are still "pliable" enough and not set in our ways to truly appreciate different cultures and peoples.

Our dad was stationed to Germany from 1967 thru the summer of 1969. It was right at three years. This was a normal military hitch. He was going to be the enlisted man in charge of the officers club at Gerzewski Barracks in Karlsruhe, Germany. This area is in the Bavarian foothills in southern Germany and beautiful.

The most striking thing about Germans is that they are fastidious in how they maintain everything. Even their woods (and I'm not talking just in parks) were manicured and raked. It was pretty incredible to see. You have to understand that the entire country was pretty well leveled only 25 years earlier. So they were still in a rebuilding hase at that time.

Another great thing was that compared to the United States, we were all of a sudden wealthy. The U.S. had the strongest economy in the world at that time and the strongest currency. At that time the currency rate for the deutch mark and the dollar was exchanging at a rate of 4:1. Now it's 1:1. For those of you who don't travel a lot that meant our dollars were worth 4 now for every dollar my dad got in wages. That translated to a salary increase of 400%. Too cool, if you ask me.

There are so many things to tell you about. I think I'll start with the club first. The military club systems entertainment overseas is/was run by the USO. This is at the height of the cold war with the USSR. Germany east and west was armed to the teeth and both sides expected an invasion at any time. In Vietnam things were going gangbusters. The USO was running entertainment to all the troops in both theaters of operation. We're not

talking penny ante acts. Bob Hope, The Beach Boys, were common acts everyone knows. I'd rather just list some of the groups I remember seeing instead of trying to describe each show. These are not in any order of importance or prestige!

The Beach Boys

Blood Sweat and Tears

Herman's Hermits

The Rolling Stones

The Temptations

Diana Ross

Frankie Valley

Fats Domino

Chubby Checker

Mamma's and Pappa's

Deep Purple

Top of the line Comedy Acts

Any time our dad had a great act at the club he would let us three oldest kids go see the show and meet the people in the acts and bands. Most of the time we got show posters as well. Never kept any of them but sure wished we had. They would be worth a fortune now.

How many people get to see shows like this in their lifetime? How many get to see dozens us close and personal and get to meet the stars afterwards? How many get to do this as a kid? My dad even though we weren't rich, was able to give us these invaluable experiences and gifts. We learned to have a real appreciation for live performances. This includes theater and music. We appreciate all the arts, no matter what the genre. We also got to see that these people weren't "godly" as many think. The majority were as down to earth and normal as you could expect given their circumstances. More than one star as "went off the deep end" because they just couldn't get people to treat them normally. It's a shame really, they do what they love, and end the end suffer for it.

These weren't the only gifts we received from a cultural point of view or expansion if you will. Part of the dependent programs offered by the military whenever you're not in the United States (all TV was in German), the only sport was soccer (where they didn't necessarily like Americans), because there is not much to do on a military base in general for kids.

There was a program available to kids 10-13, offered by the Military /Dependent Care Program

for kids in this age bracket to Herrin-Chemise Castle in the German Alps, live in the castle for 10 days, learn to ski, and visit a salt mine outside Salzburg, Austria.



Can you imagine being a third child in a large family, not accustomed to the one being treated special, suddenly living in a castle, eating dinner at the same table kings ate at (it was like Harry Potter meals), servants were in full uniform (wigs and all) and over all being treated like royalty? Duh.....I loved it.



Now that part stroked the vain side of person. My ego was stroked whenever we went up to the ski slopes and learn. At first it was your normal “V” pattern going down the slopes. Anyone who’s learned skiing knows the pattern. It’s kind of like sailing back and forth down a hill so that you don’t gather too much speed. It’s to teach you to how to control yourself and your skis, and to learn how to fall without killing yourself. Once you have learned it you can participate in slalom competitions. Learning skiing was easy. I was pretty small and well-coordinated.

You had to be, to live in my house. It was a matter of survival. Also, I stated before that we all loved competition. It was us. It didn’t matter if it was cards, charades, wrestling, fighting, running, etc. We competed to the fullest. Never give up and never surrender. I ended up winning 3 medals for downhill, downhill slalom, and group slalom. The instructors said I was a natural. It’s something I’ve kept up with over the years and even have skied with my daughter in the Rockies and in the Appalachian Mountains.

That was pretty awesome to be sure. But I enjoyed the Salt Mines as well. Most Americans don’t know ancient European history. They just don’t care. We’ve always been that way as a nation until we have to care. Europeans traded across the continent in the early days before and during the Roman Empire in many of the goods that still are traded today.



One of the most important items in pre-industrialized society was “salt”. It was

used as sterilizers, as a food preservative, in medicines, for just about every aspect of ancient life. The salt mines in Austria had been operated since before the birth of Christ.



The salt mine we visited had been operated for over a thousand years. It was 3,000 feet deep and had caverns the size of modern stadiums. It was incredible to see. It reminded me of how an ant farm operates between those thin panes of glass.

Where we in America run salt mines and run heavy

equipment into the mines, they still did it the old fashioned way back then. The salt was mined by hand and then transported to the surface through a series of conveyors. Each conveyor was 50 ft. long but they are cars pulled along by a chain conveyor. Picture it being like stairs in a stairwell of a hotel. 50 ft. then you turn and go up, then turn again. If you were a worker you rode in the cars to go back up.

What I didn't explain was how you get down. How many of you know what German lederhosen are? You've all seen them a thousand times. There best associated with "Oktoberfest" or any other German festivity. It's those funny leather shorts with suspenders and the ornamental bib. The Germans and Austrians used them to slide down mountains in the snow instead of walking down.

In a salt mine they are used to slide down long slides that run parallel to the rail cars going up. Let me tell you, you get going pretty fast down those slides in the dark. It's kind of scary and fun at the same time. All in all it was great. We learned about history and how things

worked a millennium ago. I'll never forget it for as long as I live.



was able to skimp and save and come up with the money for the trip. Oh, it made my older brother and sister

jealous. Being the third kid with an older brother and sister, you don't get a lot of opportunities to be "special". My thanks to her for this! Forever, and ever, and ever! This was the first time I was able to blossom as it were on my own. I did great by the way.



The whole trip was 10 days and there was a cost. It was \$75.00 @ child, and that needed to have a little pocket money. This was a fortune by a military family's standard. When you had 7 kids (my little brother Kelly was born just after we arrived in Germany) and a newborn it was next to impossible. I don't know how, she did it but my mom



We've always been kind of nomadic or gypsy like. It wasn't anything to just pick up on a Saturday or Sunday and load all of us in the car and just go driving. Hell, we might go 2 or 3 hundred miles in a day. Not going anywhere in particular, traveling mostly on back roads and thru small towns. It

didn't matter where we were
we always did it.

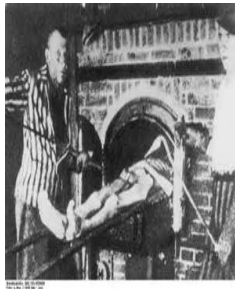


We drove all over Europe
and there were a couple of
things that stand out. Again,
it was only one generation
after World War II so there
were many Nazi war
memorials to see.

We visited a little place
south of Munich called
Dachau. It didn't look like
much from the outside or
when you entered the main
gate. There were a bunch of
barracks (being military kids
it was normal to see), some
industrial type brick buildings
and in general looked like an
old training camp.

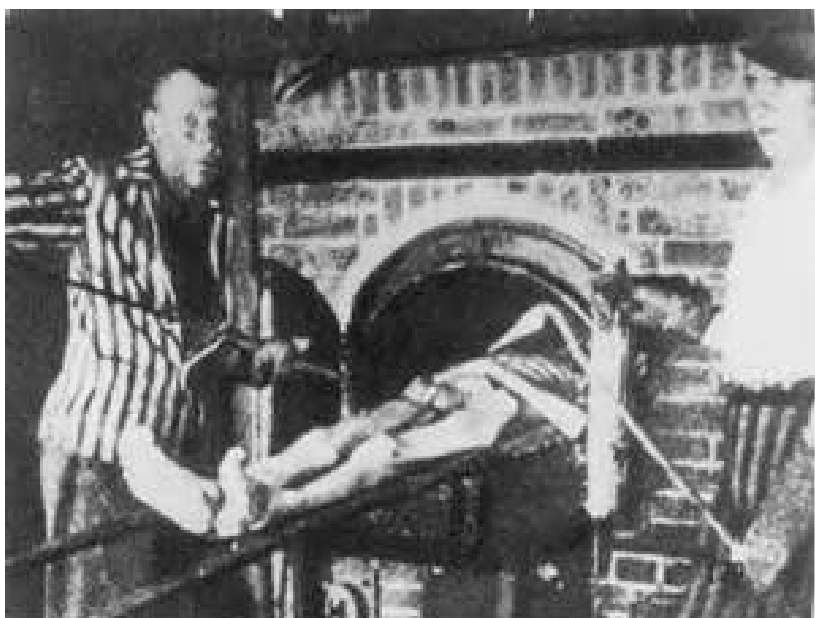


Once you got inside though all that changed. You went inside the war memorial building and the horror of the place is displayed up-close and personal. Thousands of photographs were hung of prisoners being taken to the gas house, or to the corpses being brought to the ovens to be incinerated after being gassed. They used bulldozers to bury bodies when the crematorium couldn't keep up with the sheer number of people

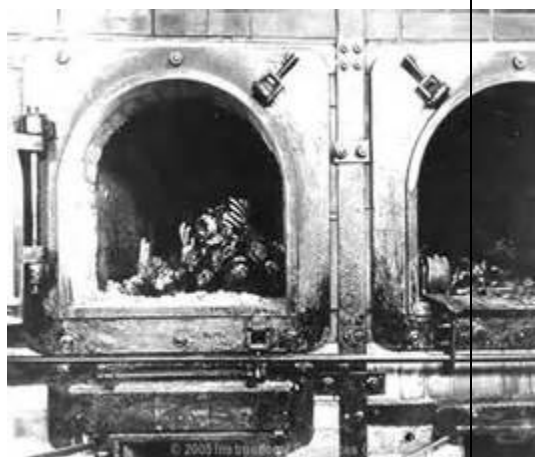


being murdered. The Germans photographed everything. It was gruesome.





Study	Year	Country	Sample size	Study design	Outcome
1	2001	USA	1000	Case-control	10%
2	2002	USA	2000	Cohort	15%
3	2003	USA	3000	Case-control	12%
4	2004	USA	4000	Cohort	18%
5	2005	USA	5000	Case-control	14%
6	2006	USA	6000	Cohort	16%
7	2007	USA	7000	Case-control	13%
8	2008	USA	8000	Cohort	17%
9	2009	USA	9000	Case-control	15%
10	2010	USA	10000	Cohort	19%



I actually got to climb into one of the ovens and look out. I swear I could feel the death in that place. I understand the memorial but I wonder about the respect for all those



that died there. What I mean is, I know that they have it so that the Germans never forget how terrible they were, but touring it? I just don't know about that.

The other place we got to go see was the "Eagles Nest". This was Hitler's private sanctuary on the top of a mountain in the Bavarian Alps. In and of itself it looked just like any other alpine Chateau. I guess it's when I see old documentary footage with Hitler there, and knowing that I've been there, that makes it interesting.



Later that summer I learned that I definitely was not psychic. I was 11 and I was just learning about Greek mythology, Carl Sagan, etc. My horizons were starting to broaden. Overseas you read a lot of books because the television

is in another language, and I got to reading about telekinesis, bending spoons, and all that other spur ideas.

Now knowing I was special, I decided to test my theory. If every living thing in the world had a "spirit or energy", then that energy could be sensed by more than just sight. All I needed was my massive mental abilities, and something with energy. No problem. There was a stretch of woods between the playground and the quarter's area. All I would have to do is close my eyes, walk through the woods, sense the trees and avoid them. Theory validated; I would be a psychic.

I walked outside and stood on the path going to the playground. I summoned all my psychic abilities, and I could feel the power surging thru me.....I took the first step.....all ok.....I took another step.....ok.....no problem. With each step I took less and less caution becoming more confident in my abilities. 10, 11, 12.....this was going to work. AMAZIN..... ...POW. Suddenly I was on the ground. I had been hit and knocked to the ground. Who?.....What?.....I t was kind of hard to think. I had been hit so hard I couldn't even get up turn around and run. This was unthinkable. That had always been my escape in the past.

I shook my head and slowly got to my knees and then to my feet. I felt something warm and put my hand to my face. It was covered it blood. I was bleeding again and not just a little. I opened my eyes to see who had done this to me. Lo and behold I couldn't believe my eyes. There in front of me stood the biggest bastard of a tree you ever saw. I had run right into it with my head and ended up getting nine stiches in my forehead. From that moment forward I understood that I do not, under any condition, have a single iota of psychic ability. Enough of that topic, Carl Sagan.

In the beginning of our third year in Karlsruhe, I was hurt pretty badly in another stupid accident. No, not an accident, I believe it was attempted murder.

The day after school got out for the summer. Let me re-phrase that. The morning after school got out for the summer, my older sister and I had the chore of doing dishes after breakfast. There were always a lot of dishes after preparing a meal for 9.

" I had to stop and call Diane a few minutes ago because I couldn't remember what we were fighting about that morning. I feel better because she doesn't remember either."

She was washing the dishes and I was rinsing and drying. Just like always we were arguing over something. Don't even know what. She said something I didn't like and I swung to hit her. She had her hands in the dishwater getting ready to wash a glass. By sheer coincidence (or so she's claimed over the years with a smile on her face I might add) she had a broken glass in her hand at the same time. As I swung she raised her had to block the blow. My right hand hit the glass and the curvature of the glass literally removed all the muscles and tendons in the top of my hand just like a skinning knife would.

We both looked shock for a second. All you could see was bone. It didn't bleed or anything. It was just kind of dead looking. There weren't any muscles to hold the fingers up so they just kind of dangled like tentacles. It couldn't have been more than 1 second that we were both frozen, and I swear 10,000 thoughts went through my head in that second.

The spell was broken when the first squirt of arterial blood shot about 4 foot up and hit the ceiling. Diane screamed bloody murder and took off running. Thank Sis! I grabbed my wrist by instinct and squeezed tight. Remember, this was by no means my first incident involving blood and stiches.

We were old hands. No panic.....just another trip to the hospital and another ass whooping. It was Old business.

I should never have looked down at it up close and personal though. That was it, even for me. I thought oh fuck. This wasn't your normal injury. I grabbed a towel and wrapped over it and sat down on the kitchen floor.

In a couple of seconds my mom came running in and told me to take to the towel off so she could see it. When I did her face went whiter than mine I think. Now I was 12 and we lived up 4 flights of stairs of a barracks they had converted into dependent housing. Anyway, she carried down those four flights of stairs and sat me down on the bench outside to wait on an ambulance.

It was 30 minutes by ambulance to Heidelberg where the facilities were needed for this kind of accident. I almost bleed to death on the way and was in shock. There it was **Bullet #4**. But it didn't get me that time either.

We arrived at the military hospital and the doctor there was amazing. He numbed the area with a local, and I and my mom got to watch as he grabbed each tendon from the finger, pulled on it, and then found the

corresponding tendon in the wrist and connected them with titanium wires. The whole process took about an hour and it was done.

This was the first time that a doctor told me that I wouldn't be able to do something after being hurt. Note that I said the first time. There were many over my life. This doctor told me that I would only have 50% mobility and use of that hand for the rest of my life.

Guess what, I type 100 words per minute and the tinsel strength of that hand is 40% greater than my left. Don't tell me I can't do something. I'm not a Mexican's, I'm a MexiCan't, sorry. What's my other favorite saying; "I don't have any problems, I only have solutions!" It's a life philosophy.....remember in the beginning when I said; "Never give up, Never Surrender!

One of the things I implied but didn't dwell on, was that in Germany, Americans were appreciated beyond believe. It wasn't just WW II but it was the reconstruction and even John Kennedy going over at the beginning of the Cold War (when the Russians built the Berlin Wall) and said "Ich bein ein Berliner". Basically all of Europe was like this. We were still heroes and worshipped to a certain extent.

The whole time we were in Germany we felt this pride but we felt it the most in July of 1969. My dad had finally got orders back to CONUS (that's the U.S.) for non-military types, and we were to fly out of the new airport in Munich in anticipation of the 1972 Summer Olympic Games that were to be held there in 3 years. They were just starting to build the venues at the Olympic Village. I told my dad on the way to the airport that I hoped I would get to come back and actually see the Olympics. He told me that anything was possible. I didn't know I would be seeing this same scene three years later but not as a happy memory but with the Palestinian Terrorist killing Israeli athletes at the Olympic Village I was looking at now in 1969.



The victims of Munich



That night at the airport waiting for our flight was the topping on the entire trip. There is no way that it would/could have been scripted any better. What was the highest note for Americans in 1969? What did we accomplish as a nation that no one in the entire world had ever done before?



That night, in July 1969,
my family was sitting in the
flight departure area of
Munich Airport when, Neil
Armstrong, landed and then
walked on the moon. It was
broadcast to the entire world
that night simultaneously.
That night we watched it on
airport television, as a family,
and we could never be
prouder, not as a family or as
Americans. I asked my dad if
I could go outside and wave
up to Neil Armstrong. He let
me and my brother do it.
Wonderfully, it was a full
moon that night/early
morning in Germany. A
storybook
departure.....
.....Goodbye
Europe....home again, home
again, jiggety jig.

Chapter 10

“Living as a
normal
American.....
.....OMGGG
G”

So, here we were back in the states in late summer of 1969. My life so far had been proud in the 50's, proud in the early 1960's, not proud from 1964-1967, proud again from 1967-1969, and now not too proud again, from 1970-1975. You have to wonder how me, or any of my brothers or sisters were able to keep it straight in our heads and not be totally fucked up. You've got to remember that these changes did not occur over time but were immediate and obvious for us, by leaving the country and then coming back 3 years later. It's truly amazing to see how much does change, in such a small period of time.

We returned back to Missouri and Ft. Leonard Wood. My Dad left the military and retired after 27 years of service. I'll say it "Good job Dad, Love You!"

When my Dad left the Army he really wanted to join the Missouri Highway Patrol as a bomb expert. I think this was normal, considering his expertise in two wars and over 27 years with bombs and ordinance. He was still only 43 years old I think. He tried for three years, attending the police academy and received his bachelors in Police Science from Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, Mo, worked as a Deputy Sheriff in Greene County; all of these efforts were aimed solely at becoming a Missouri Highway Patrolman.

He was denied. He wasn't denied because of his ability or record. These were exemplary. He was denied because at 5 foot tall he was too short. He wouldn't look good in uniform for the State of Missouri. He said the same thing I would say today.....FUCK YOU.....you arrogant assholes. 80% of the world is our size; you're just too stupid to realize it. Size does not determine capabilities. I do not have a "Napoleonic Complex" even though I'm only 5'1. I have met very few people with my capabilities or experiences, so you have nothing to tell me about

size.....sorry. One other very minor point please. All the large people I know or are acquainted with, are falling apart physically. Their backs, hearts, knees, feet, and joints are breaking down by carrying around 200 – 300 lbs. forever. I'm 139 and my dimensions are the same as when I was 20 years old. I swim a mile every day in the lake by the house and bike 5-7 miles every day. I feel great. I take no pills.....But we're inferior because of 6 or 7 inches. If I avoid your problems by being small then I'm the lucky

*"This is Ash Grove,
the original land
map, registered
with Greene County,
as it was first laid
out in the 1890's.
It hasn't grown a
lot since then.*

one.



This period, from 1970-1975, covered junior high and high school for me. I'm

going to rush thru it pretty quickly and just tell two or three little stories that stick out.

I found my first love....and first infatuation.....first slut....first love of history and learning and the teacher responsible for that, and finally the first crossroads in my life as an adult. "To be or not to be? That is the question".

Now who can forget the person that they fell in love with the first time? For me it was Kathy Spinner. She was one of the most talented singers I have ever met...

Quickly, a synopsis of life in Ash Grove:

When my dad retired we moved around for a little but finally settled in Ash Grove, Mo. This was a small town about 20 miles northwest of Springfield. It had a population of 1,200 people. The high school, grade school, and junior high were all combined on the same campus. I can tell you two things of note. I graduated in the top 10 of my graduating class and I held a state track record for 6 years after graduation plus had 128 track medals from competitions throughout high school. I told you I was a fast little sucker.

"I've got to be totally honest with you guys: yes, I did graduate in the top ten people. But, my graduating class only had 18 people graduate. Oh well, still sounds good!"

Kathy was beautiful and the voice of an angel and the body of a devil. Her dad had been assigned as the preacher at the Assembly of God in Ash Grove, having transferred from Stockton, Ca. Needless to say the congregation in Ash Grove was a little different than that of California.

I imagine that Kathy and I were partially drawn together because I understood what it was like to be different from everyone else in that small town and could sympathize.

I think that everyone knows that in high school or any small town the worst kids are as follows and this is by order of badness usually:

1. The Mayors Kids
2. The Police Officer's kids
3. The Preachers kids

These are the kids that are the terrors of small towns

across America. I guess it's a normal counter response to their parents being extreme in the other direction. You know what they say "every action demands an equal and opposite reaction." It's a law of physics. It seems like someone with funny white hair said that if I remember right.

I honestly don't think I ever gave it a thought until now but, my best friend was Roy Reed (the First Baptist Church of Ash Grove preachers son), and Kathy Spinner was my girlfriend (Her Dad was the First Assembly of God preacher). To answer your question; yes they were both wild.

Kathy and I never had sex but it wasn't from a lack of trying. How hard did I try? I think pretty hard but you are the judge.

Her trailer was attached to the back of the church. This way the preacher could go directly from where he lived to the office. Pretty good idea if you ask me. During an entire summer, I would sneak into the church at 2 or three o'clock in the morning and low crawl through the church, past the offices, into the back of Kathy's trailer and into her bedroom. We would kiss and flirt (1st and 2nd base only, sorry). To this day I don't know how I didn't get caught. Can you imagine if I had been crawling and got caught? How could I have explained something

like that? Suicide would probably been the only honorable option. In a town that small, a lynching may have been in order. Believe me, I thought about all those things every time I did it.

I had the pleasure of being thrown in jail for the first time while living in Ash Grove. It was my senior year, but because my birthday was May 11th, I turned 18, 2 weeks before we were to graduate from high school. The drinking age in Missouri is 21 for everything. However, the drinking age in Kansas for beer is 18. We lived 100 miles from the Kansas state line.

I got together with a bunch of my classmates, got a collection together, and headed alone to Kansas. I had a car, a 1965 Mustang Convertible, a new license, and a pocket full of money. I think that these are all the necessary ingredients for a disaster don't you think?

The car made it to Kansas all right (there was some question about whether it could or not), and I bought 18 cases of Coors beer. The cases completely filled the back seat and the trunk. I remember the clerk just shaking his head as he helped me load it. He knew!

On the way back I was almost home and had just crossed into Greene County around Monett, Mo. This was another small town about the same size as Ash Grove. I passed thru town and on the far side in an open field was an old fire truck. It had obviously been there for a long time. I had the brilliant idea of using the light at the party we were going to have and just hooking it up to the car battery. I would be a hit! I had the tools I needed so away across the field I went.

Now I've always been mechanically inclined (I was McGiver before McGiver), but that damn light was hard to get off. Years of rust and sitting didn't help matters any. After struggling what seemed like forever, I jerked up and the light came free. I was ecstatic. I stood up on the roof of the truck and held the light in the air in triumph. Boy was that joy short lived.

Watching me from the road was a deputy sheriff. I don't know how long he had been there but it was long enough. He raised his arm up and gestured for me to come over to his car. I could tell he didn't mean at a leisure pace either.

Needless to say things did not go well. Trespassing, destruction of private property, illegal possession of alcohol by a minor, o yea, I was going to jail. This was Friday afternoon. They

brought me to Greene county jail in Springfield, Mo. I had a bond but I had no money. My dad was a deputy in Green County so you could bet I wasn't calling home.

I sat there all day Saturday worrying and not knowing what to do. I will say the food sucked but what really scared me was when they brought breakfast Saturday morning the coffee was so hot it curled up the plastic spoon. Now that's hot coffee!

My family's last name is not common by any means. What I didn't know at the time was that my dad knew that my dad knew that I had been arrested Friday night and that he intended to let me sit there the entire weekend to learn my lesson. Sorry Dad, jail doesn't scare me. It's a great place to relax for a few weeks. You don't have to do anything but sit and read. All in all, it was a good experience. I learned that I definitely did not want to become a professional criminal. That's good right?

There was another funny story involving our family and my dad being a deputy. In 1971, he had busted the local druggie "Moe" and confiscated about 1/4 ounce of pot. We were all pretty young except for my older brother and sister. Anyway,

he sat all 7 kids down on the couch and told us to pay attention. He pulled out what looked like a cigarette and said that it was a joint.

Now you have to picture this. Here are all 7 kids sitting in a row by size and age. Larger going down the line to the smallest in order from left to right.

He lit the joint and handed it to our brother Jon. Jon took a hit and coughed. He wrinkled his nose and made a god awful face. No how no way Jose. Oh yea, I forgot to mention that he told us he was doing it so that we knew what pot was and that if we were around were it was we had better leave.

Next was Diane. She took the joint from Jon and inhaled on it like a cigarette. She exhaled and handed it to me. The same process repeated itself down the line. Oh, my Dad knew that he was in trouble. You could see his eyes squint a little and he silently mouthed "Aw Shit".

Oh yea. Jon had his reaction as my dad expected. He didn't expect the smiles on the rest of our faces, then the giggling. See what I mean, he knew.....at that exact moment.....a part of the future! What was his response? Aw Shit!

This final little story is the hardest to recall for a lot of

reasons. This was the biggest "WHAT IF I HAD DONE THIS".....moment in my life. Let me explain.

Kathy Spinner and her family moved back to California when I was a junior in high school. By this time we had lived in town for over 4 years and were still outsiders but we were accepted at the same time.

One of the most popular girls in school while I was in junior high and the first 2 years of high school was a girl named Cathy Cochram. She was intelligent, beautiful, and from a very respectable farm family. She dated the most popular boy whose father ran the biggest car dealership in town. Needless to say, he had the money and the car to get whatever girl he wanted. I don't even remember his name. I do remember that he was an asshole.

Cathy was only 14 and he was 17 when they started dating and he got her pregnant. It was a big scandal as you can imagine. Worse was how he blew off Cathy and her newborn daughter and showed the whole town what a piece of shit he was.

After having her baby Cathy went back to school to finish and graduate. She lived at home on the farm with her parents so her mom watched her daughter during

the day. As with any small town back then, she was ostracized and shunned by all the popular kids. That's pretty uncool, since they all ran with her, prior to her becoming pregnant. But you know how kids are!

I empathized and we started hanging together. Next thing you know we were dating and we fell in love. I absolutely adored her and her daughter. She wanted to get married after we graduated and her dad was going to give us 100 acres to start out with and a farmhouse.

I could picture it. The sun rising over the field early in the morning as a thin layer of fog still hangs over the top of the grass from the early morning dew. Birds chirping, the chickens just starting to dig for grubs. It was the possibility of contentment and serenity.....forever. I was being handed the chance at a completely normal life free of trial and tribulation, challenges, and risks. The icing would be the love of a beautiful woman and already having a guaranteed beautiful daughter.....easy decision?

For me, this was one of the hardest decisions in my life. The grass is always greener on the other side and humans by nature want what they don't have. A normal and content life was exactly what

I had never experienced and had often fantasized about.

The cost.....what cost?.....There is always a cost for every decision made. In this instance the cost would be to give up any aspirations of traveling or seeing the world again. Farmers don't do that. Another cost would be that I would have to live in the same place for the rest of my life.....I had never lived anyplace more than 4 years at a time in my entire life in the past. No more new starts and adventures. Might as well give up learning anything new, also. Farmer's don't need to know a whole lot about world events or political science. These were my two key interests. I might as well give up my German and my Spanish. Farmers don't need to speak foreign languages. So, was there a cost? Oh yea, basically, I would be changing everything about me and about who I was.

Hence, I had the age old question. Could I live in a gilded cage trading security for adventure and dreams? Let's be realistic. No matter how sweet the companion or the life.....for me it would have been a cage. Once you've lived that kind of life, "normal" just isn't adequate most of the time. I didn't make that rule but it is REALITY.

And I chose.....
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.....
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.....
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.....
.....
.....up to this point is 1/2 second.....NO WAY/I love you but sorry. Gotta Go.....I was gone the next day.

That all sounds so cold like that doesn't it. I tried to explain to her that inadvertently we set out on this course and no matter how it ended she was going to have a broken heart. I didn't know it. I didn't intend it. I just knew she needed a friend. Neither of us thought about it. I think she had marriage and settling down in her mind from the start. I was warned many times that all she was looking for was a husband. It wasn't true. I never felt like I was being roped in.....not a single time.

Now that it was 2 years later, I knew deep down that either way I chose she lost. If I stayed out of compassion but really didn't want to be there it couldn't help but end

badly. You can't be miserable and expect to make everyone around you happy. It wouldn't work. Believe me; I had seen it up close and personal.

The other choice was for me to leave then, break clean and save her a lot of grief in the future. She was better off finding a husband from around there. It would be a better fit. Problem was my ego did not want to let her or her daughter go out of sheer pride. After all, she had been abandoned by Brent before pretty unceremoniously.

Either way was bad, but I had to choose to leave. It was the best all around. Once I made that decision, I left and never looked back. I passed thru Ash Grove a couple of times but never visited, never attended a class reunion, never wished to remind her or me of what might have been. Is that bizarre or selfish? I've questioned it for 45 years and still don't have an answer. P.S. She was the only woman I completely loved in my whole life. I didn't know that was what I was giving up at the time.

Before I leave my high school years, I have got to talk about a couple of incidents that occurred during that time. I witnessed all of them as did many people. For me they reinforced that Americans and America was getting more and more screwed up every day that passed. It also made me sure I wanted to leave.

In 1969 our dad had promised my brother and I that we would get to go back to Munich to attend the Olympic summer Games to be held in July. It was perfect because we were out of school for the summer, and we had friends to stay with in Karlsruhe so there wouldn't be any housing cost. Overall, the cost was pretty affordable.

My Brother Jon's birthday is May the 9th and mine is the 11th. On MAY 10TH he called both of us into the kitchen and told us to sit down. We both wondered what we had done but there wasn't any doubt we were in trouble again. We didn't dare ask because both of us a dozens of secrets worthy of a butt whooping.

We both came into the kitchen and sat down. My dad was in the ice box with his back toward us. Jon and I stared at each other first questioning, and then accusing

each other of doing something stupid and even worse getting caught. All this passed between us in about 2 seconds. My dad turned around and thru and envelope on the table. It was plain white with nothing written on it, but it was thick.

Jon opened it up and oh shit,.....it was 2 tickets, round trip (always important to know your family would like you back), to Munich and 3 day passes to venues. Now, how great is that. Normally, we couldn't afford it but knowing people there and cutting out food and lodging, made the trip just cheap enough to be affordable.

My dad drove us to St. Louis, and dropped us of at the airport. They were going on to Granite City to visit her parents and family for 4 days and pick us back up in St. Louis. This way they would only have to go across the Mississippi River to pick us up. It was perfect all the way around. That is perfect until we actually landed in Germany.

The flight was perfect; the touchdown perfect, even the weather was perfect. We boarded the plane and went through customs as usual. The lines were slow but they always are in-coming because people bring in all types of goods and try not to declare them. This way they avoid the import tax on the

item and then turn around and sell it on the black market.

After waiting in line for an hour we were all shuttled into an airport hangar and systematically questioned and searched by a large number of military types looking "attendants". Once we were cleared we were shuttled back into the airport lobby. We were told that we would not be allowed to leave the terminal and that we would be re-boarding the same plane just as soon as it was cleaned and refueled. Other than that, they would tell us anything.

The victims of Munich



We all got seats in the lobby and somebody turned on the lobby television. There it was for the entire world to see. Just 20 yards from us a broadcast journalist was doing the news and reporting about the Palestinian taking a bunch of Israeli athlete's hostage. We then spent the next 4 hours watching the horror. After that we were packed up and sent back to the U.S. Who knows, if we

had been one day earlier
would we have

Been involved? Can't say,
but I don't care to dwell on it
either.

What else happened?

America was introduced to
the EPA and Superfund at this
time. Younger people can't
realize just how bad we let
everything get as far as the
environment was concerned.
Corporations and individuals
neither seemed to care about
how they were destroying
things. We were on the
verge of losing the American
Bald Eagle forever because
of DDT. It didn't end there. I
remember the huge barges
that were being towed out of
New York Harbor and
dumped offshore. Remember
the news stories of the
needles washing up on the
Jersey Shore?

I do believe that it
was the one Indian that
turned things around.
Remember the
commercial that made us
ashamed to litter? What
was the guy's name? It
was Chief Iron Eyes.
Funny, but he was an
Italian Actor and not an
American Indian. What
do you think Americans
would have thought

about that in the 1970's?



This had to be the most popular anti-litter campaign in the history of the world!

history of the world!



Then there was Love Canal. This was the momma dump site of them all in America. It was in upstate New York

The contamination was everywhere. I remember the Mononglahela River catching fire in Pittsburg, and the Hudson River doing the same thing in Boston. It was nonsense like this that caused the EPA to have to be created.

Back to the story; all this stuff we kept hearing about was happening on the east and west coast. I remember wondering what kind of crazy people would do

something like that. Who would knowingly contaminate their own back yard? I was glad that nothing happened like that in the Ozarks.

Hello Times Beach how you doing?

For you that don't know, Times Beach was an older residential community on the Merrimac River just outside of St. Louis. It



was also adjacent to a brand new theme park "6-Flags over Mid-America". At that time there were only 2 others in the United States. Needless to say, it was a tourist destination. Whenever we went to Illinois to see family we drove through it on I-44. It was just another suburb until the early 1970's.

Some claim that it was a single asshole trying to save a couple of thousand dollars in disposal cost for the dioxin, and I heard others say that the government wanted the property.....I don't know which is true but a picture speaks a thousand words:



The independent truckers started a slowdown and this cost caused inflation to soar. There were the non-independents that kept running of course. Someone decided on the brilliant idea of taking pot shots at company trucks to scare these drivers into participating in the slowdown. The dumb-ass shot a truck filled with explosives from Tri-State Motor Transit. This



company moves munitions all over the United States for the government. It was full of blasting caps and explosives. It wasn't too smart. It blew a hole in the interstate 60 feet across and 20 feet deep. That's a big hole. We felt the blast 20 miles away in Ash Grove. It rattled windows as far as 30 miles away. I bet the shooter thought "oh shit.....!."

We had an up close and personal experience with 4 back to back Republican presidents breaking the backs of the unions in this country. Do you remember the "Wildcat Trucker Strikes of the early 1970's"? Independent truckers were striking because we had our first gas shortage in 1974 (thank you President Nixon) and fuel in this country tripled in cost overnight. People rushed the gas stations and the system couldn't keep up.

Funny, but I went to work for them 10 years later. Also, there was a 15 foot northern blue spruce (a perfect Christmas tree), that was next to the blast area but not destroyed. My Dad and his friend Bob went down and stole that tree for our house for Christmas that year. Right

off the Interstate, can you believe it. When I asked him about it, he told me that he didn't believe the "chicken-shit Mo State Police were capable of catching anyone". Of course, he and Bob was both drunk, and I do believe he still held a grudge about not being admitted in. What do you think?

I intentionally saved the last part of this chapter to tell you about 2 people that deserve to be recognized. Both are probably dead now. But it doesn't matter to me. These 2 influenced the way I think, act, and see the world. They were the types of teachers that other teachers strive to be. The funny thing is that like all great teachers, they did it without trying and without thinking about it.

Glen Alf seemed ancient when I first met him as an 8th grader. He was tall and thin with silver hair that was unruly more times than not. He had that kindly grandfather type look, and was always, always smiling. I firmly believe that he was a genuinely happy man. This happiness reflected in everything he did and everything he taught. I think he only owned 3 suits, and because of how thin he was, they wore him instead of the other way around. You know,

it was the same way a scarecrow looks dressed up.

Mr. Alf taught Social Studies, History, and Political Science. He taught all high school and junior high classes. I was lucky enough to take every course he offered over the 5 years I went there. God, how do you describe someone that makes you want to think? Not only think, but think uniquely, outside of the box so to speak. The first day he informed us just like all his classes that facts were important to be sure. Dates were also important. But they were what they were, only facts and dates.

"These were not the important things about politics, sociology, or history. It was the "who" and the "why" that were important. If you understood these things then you understood society's mistakes thru all three disciplines and you wouldn't, be doomed to make the same mistakes as others in the past. If you only study facts and dates and places, these things have no value in the context of time".

I swear, I'll never forget that and I've practiced it my whole life!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

My initial interest in politics and political history

was directly because of him. You could tell when he talked about it he loved it. He loved understanding what motivated people to do what they did. It was no different if it was an individual or a small group, or a society. Motivations, action, and reaction. Finally, he taught that all war and economics were built on the principal of, one man taking what another man has. Either it was done by negotiation or by force. Always look for these as the main motivators in all men's actions. Now, who thinks to teach that?

He also taught all his students critical and logical thinking, that were not part of the normal high school criteria at that time. It was just part of his "technique". He gave me a love of the Greeks and "Socratic Method". He employed it every day in class. He forced you participate without belittling you. He was the kind of teacher that you wanted to excel for. I've known a handful in my entire life. Somehow, some way, I was lucky enough to have 2 in the same school teaching different topics.

The other teacher was Margaret Cummings. She officially taught English at the high school but unofficially she taught social consciences also. She went through college in the late 60's so she had a great sense of civic duty and responsibility. It

was one of the reasons that she was a teacher.

She taught English, Poetry, and Literature. I don't know it for a fact but I'd bet that she was a fine arts major in college. She was the teacher that gave me a social conscience and taught/reinforced the Kennedy concept that you had a responsibility in a democratic society to make things better and that it was wrong to sit idle and do nothing, if you saw a social injustice occurring. This was another very good thing to learn as a kid. I pretty sure it's not on the curriculum any more in high school, in the United States. If it is they need to fire the teachers and hire new ones. Obviously, the ones that they have aren't doing the job. I don't see any indication of it.

She backed up and reinforced her zeal to instill "social obligation" in us in a very unique and shall we say "forceful" manner. I have got to tell this story. Honestly, up to just a moment ago, I had forgotten it totally.

"Meeting a Legend"

Buford T. Puser - Ex-Military
"CARRIES BIG WOODEN CLUB"

On Friday morning our first class was English 300.

We filed into the classroom just like every morning before the last bell rang.

There was this huge guy with our teacher. He was 6' ft. 'forever, and had hands the size of boxing gloves. He had a big wooden club in one hand and his clothes matched the rest of him.

Our teacher introduced him as "Buford, and believe me, he looked like a Buford. He and my teacher were both from the same little town in Arkansas. He told us how he had left and went to Vietnam. Before he left, their town was the post-card perfect town. When he returned, there was a casino, drugs, prostitution, and poverty.

He explained that the "club" was what he used to "deter" the thugs and druggies responsible for all the nonsense that was going on. He'd been attacked on numerous occasions and the club was his defense. After he left "Nam he swore he'd never use a gun again. So, instead of a gun he used a club.

He told us that he was going to run for sheriff in the fall because even the law in town was crooked and on the take. Later that year, that guy was elected sheriff. Our teacher was very proud when she told us. Her whole purpose was to not sit by while others do something wrong and others are

victimized. You have a social obligation in a democracy to stand up to tyranny and thuggary.

If I remember right that was in 8th grade. By the 12th grade, Buford Puser, who's story was the basis of "Walking Tall" and his part played by "The Rock" in the movie, was killed just 3 years later..

Chapter 11

"I can't know for sure but you have to wonder that if they could get away with killing a president, why not someone this small? "Lead by example" Mr. President!"

"9 Months to Backpack across Europe and see the world."

Now I was an Army Brat plain and simple. Once the decision was made not to stay with Cathy, it didn't take me long to decide what to do. We were in the middle of a recession and gas shortages, unemployment were skyrocketing, it wasn't the best time to look for a long term job.

I had not been unemployed since I was 13, I'd worked in restaurants all thru high school. Continuing in that profession didn't seem like much for opportunity and advancement. I decided to join the Army.





u25425862 fotosearch.com

There were 2 reasons. First, they were getting ready to phase out the "Old GI Bill" that had been in effect since after WWII. A lot of the benefits that soldiers had in the past, were not going to be offered to soldiers of the future. I enlisted on the last day of the last hour of the old GI Bill.

I also signed up for delayed entry as an

*I want to
personally thank
Jimmy Carter. If
he hadn't been a
woosy
president*

Interrogator/translator and received a \$2,500.00 bonus for enlisting. I had 9 months before I had to report to basic training in Ft. Leonard Wood. I packed my backpack, clothes, and passport and headed out the very next day. I think I always knew this was how my life would end in Ash Grove. It was way past time to start on another adventure. There is that old saying that applies in this instance for sure, "He who hesitates is lost!"

It was June and I had until April 30th to report for duty. That left 11 months maximum, but I knew, I'd better be back by early March at the latest. I had a start point, an end point, and the money to proceed (or at least get started).

A word of caution to the reader or would be adventurer. In 1975 this trip was possible. Now, because of different sentiments toward Americans, the profitability of kidnapping in 2nd and 3rd world countries, and world terrorism (not so much the

terrorism portion, but the difficulty in traveling at random between nations with no itinerary or criteria) because of the potential of looking like a terrorist.

All the stars aligned (it was the Age of Aquarius, ha ha), the timing in history was ok, had the resources,
..... **I was gone!**

Most of Europe is on the same latitudes at the U.S. and the seasons are just like here. In December it snows, In April all the flowers bloom. In the context of history I was traveling just a year before the Iran/Hostage Crises. After that, the world was never the same for Americans.

Most Americans don't have a clue about how small the world really is. All the nations of Europe (excluding Russia) combined are not any bigger than the continental United States. The countries are basically the same size as our states. So, travel thru Europe is like traveling from state to state but you have to have a passport. Also, their public transportation system is far superior to ours. Trains, buses, public transportation in general allows a person easy access to all points.

As a family we had traveled to Ireland, London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam and other cities in northern Europe. I wanted to go places I had not been, so I decided on southern European countries.

I spent the first month in Spain. What a beautiful country. The people are warm and down to earth. You'll have to get out of the cities and travel the countryside. That's how you get to know what the country is really like. Come to think of it, I'd give this advice to anyone traveling in any country in the world. Cities are all the same. It's the small towns that give your insight into people and their cultures.

I started in Madrid and went to Barcelona, and then to Gibraltar (I had to see it), the closet most Americans get to it are the Prudential Insurance commercials. The next 2 months found me in Monaco, Florence, and finally in Rome.

All of these places are
worthy of pages and pages
of descriptions but this book is
getting too long anyway. I
can only say go and visit!

Now up to this point it was a pretty normal tourist trip. But there were things I wanted to see.

History has always been a passion of mine. One of the things that has always fascinated me, was the history of the Tigris-Euphrates Rivers, the Epics of Gilgamesh, and basically the birth place of modern civilization and civilized thought. The Gardens of Babylon were here (one of the original 7 wonders of the world).



The laws of Hammurabi were first created here. It was just an amazing place. How many people know what modern countries cover the area I just described?

Today, this whole place is covered by 2 countries, Iran and Iraq. It was pretty calm in the Middle East at that time. Most of the extremist were tied up fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan (remember the Freedom fighters or mujahidin? Yep, the same people we are fighting today in Afghanistan. Now, The Shaw of Iran was still in power in Iran and he

was fighting Iraq (Yep, Saddam Hussein). This wasn't much of a concern to travelers. You just stayed away from the border.

I had a working



knowledge of Farsi, and somehow I ended up in Tehran, teaching English to the Shaw's troops for 4 months. Classes were dismissed early because of an invasion in the north by Iraqi troops.

I really wasn't impressed with the Middle East, and I had met a sailor who worked a container ship that traveled back and forth from South America to the Middle East in a milk run. For those of you who don't know, a milk run is a round trip that is done over and over and over again, they call it a milk run because it's just like the dairy man that would deliver your milk to you every morning back in the 1950's. The ship would travel thru the Suez Canal, east thru the Mediterranean Sea, and into the Atlantic before heading south to Latin America.

This was the first time I really went off to somewhere different but by no means was this to be my last. I jumped on the opportunity and we spent the next 3

weeks traveling by ship to Caracas, Venezuela. The ship would dock there, unload and continue on to Rio de Janeiro. Once unloaded it would reload agriculture items and head back. I knew that I didn't have enough time to do another round trip, after all I had a date with Uncle Sam, and so I disembarked in Caracas.

all the way though. I found god more than once traveling the local buses and taxis north.

Finally, one month prior to my basic training start date, I arrived at the border and entered the U.S. in McAllen, Texas. I was thrilled to be back and even the Greyhound ride to Missouri seemed like a luxury.



I spent the next 2 months working my way north along the coast thru Columbia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and then into Mexico. It's the Inter-Continental Highway. Some call it the Pan-American Highway. At least that was what it was called in the 1960's and 1970's. This is not, a road for the faint of heart I assure you. It does go

Chapter 12

“A Life I knew and Loved”. Coming home to the Army

Basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, I couldn't believe it. When you go to basic, the military is notorious for sending you as far away from where you live as possible. They like to do this because it fosters, and it creates a sense of isolation in the recruit plus it also prevents him from going home to momma (AWOL) when things got tough.

For me it was like home. I had lived there for 6 years, I knew the doctors at the hospital by first name, and I had even played on all the weapons ranges, because my dad would go out to them to explode ordinance.

I knew every convenience store, PX, commissary, liquor store, and road on and off the post. Guess who was the popular guy in the barracks?

My brother had been thru just 1 year before me, and received the highest award possible, “Trainee of the Cycle”. That meant that among about a thousand trainees, he was determined to be the best. NOT BAD,

AND IT WAS DEFINATELY A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW.

I did all right in all the training and the 4 months went by quickly. I'd like to tell you that I did as well as my brother but that would be a lie. I found out that I excelled at marksmanship (they immediately wanted to make me a sniper, (I shot expert in qualification with three perfect scores) but I sucked at marching. What could you expect, I had an inseam of only 27 inches. Some animal's penises are longer. For every step a normal sized soldier took, I took 2. It was hard but I did it.

I graduated basic and was sent to the desert of southern Arizona, to attend Interrogation School at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona.

When I mention that I was an interrogator most people reactions are predictable. Either they have fear in their eyes thinking I tortured people, or they think I was an asshole because I tortured people. Either way, people associate “interrogator” with torture. By default, I therefore was an “Asshole”.

“An interrogator that has to torture to get information is unreliable at best and not to be trusted.” A tortured individual will give you what he thinks you want to hear, not what necessarily is, “the truth. “ Avoid him and his intelligence. You will save lives on the battlefield.” CW3 Carl Winnegar – 218th MI Detachment/XVIII Airborne Corps, Ft. Bragg, NC 1977.

There are only 500 interrogators in the Army world-wide at any one time. All are professionals, and not a single one that I have met uses/used torture as a means of extracting information.

The notorious pictures of Abu Ghraib prison, with the soldiers riding the prisoners, and tales of torture in Gitmo, those guys were not military

interrogators! In the prison photos they are military police officers, and in GITMO and overseas they are CIA.



I don't approve of their tactics or techniques. They do not fall under the moral upper ground we normally have as Americans. You bring yourself down to their level and employ their tactics; you are no better than they are, period. The right wing conservatives in power won't agree, but they have never really believed in morals or doing what is right have they. They have power why does the rules apply to them? The end justifies the means and not the other way around. Does good information from these bad guys justify us torturing people? Why would that be any different than what the Gestapo did prior to WW II in Germany to preserve the "State"? Sounds identical to me. What did you say? We're not the NAZI's? My response would

be “,
no,
not
yet,
but

you're getting closer”.

On the entry way, above the door, as you walk in to

the Orderly Room of the 218th Military Intelligence Detachment in Ft. Bragg, was a saying that I was proud of way back then, and I still am today.

I graduated with no problem and was stationed to Monterey, California; to attend Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language School (DLI/FLC) at the Presidio of Monterey above Monterey Bay. This is prime real estate right next to Pebble Beach and Carmel.

***“Our job is to make a person betray
their country and make sure they
feel good about it!”***

Ft. Huachuca is in southern Arizonian about an hour south of Tucson. While I was in school I visited the OK Corral, Bisbee, and many other sites that you read about in old west battles. I was in the same area where Wyatt Earp and the Clantons, and those wonderful stories originated. Some places were “touristy” no doubt, but that was OK. It's America for God's sake. But if you used your imagination, you could see how hard the life was. How hard life had to be in the desert. The movies are cool, the reality had to be harder than you or I could deal with. Are you going to die that day? Who's just going to be pissed off and shoot a bunch of people? Are you going to eat that day? When was that? The 1870's if I'm right, oh shit, you know what? It sound exactly like 2113 doesn't it? Just the scenery is changed.

Totally awesome, if you have never been there.

Don't ask me why, I had absolutely no experience with one, but something possessed me to buy a motorcycle. I hadn't even ever ridden one before, let alone drive one. I still remember it. It was a 400 Suzuki, brand new, and I was tickled pink. Most of you think that's just a baby, but you don't get a bike you can't pick up off the ground, and I weighed 125 soaking wet. Even at that size I couldn't put both feet on the ground at the same time. To me it felt huge (that was at first). Obviously, I didn't kill myself. I did come close a couple of times. None of these were because of other people. I never had any one pull in front of me or anything like that. I guess I was lucky. Just like always.

When I left Ft. Huachuca, I
had 30 days leave and
decided to go back to
Missouri before heading to
California. I was going to do
it all on my new motorcycle.
Let me tell you, that by the
time I got the 1,000 miles to
Missouri from southern
Arizona, I was shitting water.
The vibration from a bike that
small over a long distance will
loosen teeth and bowels with
equal enthusiasm.

This was my first leave
since I had entered the Army,
so I showed off a little to my
friends and family. Oh well, I
had bragging rights. I stayed
at home for a couple of
weeks and then took off for
California. I felt that I now
had a good feel for travel by
motorcycle and I was
recuperated from the first
trip. So, with a sense of high
hope I told everyone
goodbye and jumped on I-44
(old Route 66) and headed
west again. This time, I was
alone and not with the family.
It would be different, but a
new adventure none the less.
Ready.....Set.....
.....Go!

Chapter 12

“Attending Defense Language Institute, Understanding California”



Defense
Language
Institute is

the U.S. Government's official language school for every branch of government. You might see CIA NSA, Embassy personnel, diplomats, etc. there, at any given time. It was kind of a cool place just to hang out and hear old war stories. I thought I had some good ones, but I was an amateur by their standard.

They teach every language in the world, with instructors that are native to the countries of the languages they teach. Not only that, but you would have 4-5 instructors from different

regions so that you learn regional colloquialisms/dialects, at the same time.

It didn't matter what language you were studying or learning, you were not allowed to speak English in class after the first day of training. Never....Ever.....Ever. You were forced to speak and think in the language you were taking. The method works. Think about it. The things you remember learning, were those that put you on the spot and made you break a sweat, didn't they? Oh yea, put somebody on the spot and do a CAT scan. I bet you see all sorts of neurons firing. It's probably primordial and part of our original defense mechanism, you know "respond or die" to an unexpected event. From that point, I would think Darwinian Theory would take over, and survival of the fittest and fastest to react would rule genetically. It's a load of bull but I like the sound of it. I could argue that point I think! Anyway, the attrition rate was very high.....better than 60% for most languages. People just had a hard time with this type of intensive training.

I had an advantage, but you don't know how many potentially great interrogators were not able to proceed because they couldn't do it. In the military, you have to be at least bi-

lingual to be an interrogator. Most interrogators speak 4-5 languages, and can read 8-10 because of language and vocabulary similarities. I can use "me "and my languages, as an example.

In learning Spanish, I had a reasonable working knowledge of Italian, Portuguese, French, and Greek. That's because all these languages use the same sentence structure. You just have to change the vocabulary. In most instances, even the vocabulary is very similar with only slight differences. The same holds true with Germanic Languages. If you speak German, you can probably read, Danish, Polish, Austrian, and Swiss. Russian allows you Ukrainian and other Slavic languages. So once you learned one, you are one the road to many if you want to proceed.

Language school wasn't a problem but I do have a couple of interesting stories to relay to you readers. These don't have to do with the school itself but they did help me to "grow" as a person.

The trip to California was one that I had made 14 years earlier in the back of a camper, if you remember (i.e. our farting contest). This trip back to California was just as memorable and unique in its own right.

The beginning thru Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico were normal and without any problems other than me being poor as always.

When you're traveling thru the desert on a motorcycle what are your concerns?

- Maybe running out of gas?
- The engine going out?
- Overheating?
- Hitting an animal or snake?
- The Space Shuttle falling?
- Even a plane landing on the road maybe?

I like to think that I was prepared for all that. You've heard the saying "that when life hands you lemons make lemonade", right? What do you do when you're handed a hurricane in the desert and you're on a motorcycle?

Water Wings?.....Who has the bad luck to have to drive thru the desert in a hurricane, on a motorcycle, and can't stop for two reasons. First, I only had 24 more hours to report to the presidio or be AWOL or, stop and possibly not making it at all. What I mean by that is that I-40 is elevated thru the desert. On both sides of the road, you couldn't see the sand, it was all water and it looked like the road was ready to wash away.

Now I knew about flash flooding in the desert, and being new on a motorcycle, I didn't have a lot of faith in my own capabilities. Better not to stop!

I finally made it to Barstow, and stopped in the rest area there. I'm here to tell you that it takes 726 hits with a hand dryer in the public restroom to dry a sleeping bag. That's about an hour and a half standing there and hitting that button over and over and over again.

I survived it thank god. I was so happy to get back up to Techachapi Pass and see Bakersfield all green and beautiful. It was like coming out of the dark and into the light.

I found out later that it was a freak hurricane that came up thru Baha California and skirted the Rockies to the south and entered the desert. It doesn't happen very often but there you have it.



I arrived at the Presidio and started language school. It only took a couple of months for the next incident to occur. It is something that I will never forget and influenced me throughout the rest of my life. It's a strange coincidence that it happened on a night that was memorable, in and of itself. Let me explain a little further.

Anybody that has been in the military knows what "CQ" is. For those of you not in the military that stands for "Charge of Quarters". Anyplace there is a barracks and people are sleeping they have a person "on duty", all night to provide security, a fire watch, and answer phones in case of deployment, etc. There are normally 2 people at least. A Commissioned Officer and a Non-Commissioned Officer or (NCO/Sergeant).

I earned my merit badge on this one!

On this night in late 1976, I had the duty. You have to understand that the Presidio was an all services school. There were 4 primary sets of living quarters. You can picture these in your mind being a lot like dorms at college, instead of military barracks. After all, these guys were pretty much the elite of every branch of service from the Air Force to the Army. Each branch had their own dorm and mess hall attached.

Everyone avoided the Marine/Navy mess hall. No matter what they say about the cooks in the Navy being the best in all the services, it was not true at that time. Most of us would have rather ate c-rations than eat there. Hell, they were Marines; you might get a frog in your soup. If you couldn't identify it, don't eat it, that's my motto.

Our mess hall in the Army Barracks was adequate. But, if you've eaten in one you have eaten in them all. There isn't a lot of variety and they all used the same menu cards. Everyone knows that variety is the spice of life and most of us ate at the Air Force Mess Hall instead of this one. It had a better menu and better variety. I guess they had a better budget than we did.

The Air Force mess hall was by far the favorite of most of the students on the Presidio. As long as you had a military meal card you could eat at any one of the mess halls you wanted. Most of us went there daily. The food was normally great and they served steak 2 nights a week.

That evening meal was pretty much like any other. They served 2 types of meat, veggies, like green beans or corn, bread, and dessert. By the way, it was always all you could eat. This night was steak night so they were exceptionally busy. I remember I went there to eat, but the line went out the door and around the corner. I had duty starting at 1800 hrs. , damn I had to skip the meal.

Boy was that a good decision, or just plain luck, or maybe I have a guardian angel, it doesn't matter. Whew, another bullet was dodged.

I was sitting in the office watching TV with my boots propped up on the desk. I was watching CNN coverage of Anwar Sadat going to Jerusalem to meet Meacham Began of Israel for the first time. When I say the first time, I mean the real first time. An Egyptian President had never gone to Israel since its creation in the 1950's. It

was as historic as man landing on the moon. It gave the possibility for peace in the Middle East for the first time in 20 years. Of course, being a history buff, I wanted to see it up close and personal.

Just as President Sadat was stepping down off the plane, a soldier came into the office and said that he was sick and that I needed to call an ambulance. He sat down and I picked up the phone to call the CO. About that time he fainted.

I ran over to him and checked his vital signs. His temperature was skyrocketing and he was burning up. It felt like his temp was 104 or 105. I didn't know for sure but I knew it was bad. I got him back up and awake and called the CO back. As I was relaying the information on the first incident another soldier came in complaining of the same flu like symptoms.

Being in the military you think about a lot of possibilities that a normal person might not think about in this type of an emergency. Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Training (NBC) are part of normal military training.

The symptoms were consistent with a biological attack but we were in California and it was peace time. Have you guessed what it was? We

sent over 300 people to the hospital in Monterey that night. Many of them had to be put into large trash bags because they could not stop shitting on themselves. They had no ability to keep anything down and no ability to control their bowel movements. Guessed yet? Yep,.....it was a really bad case of food poisoning. Botulism to be specific.

We found out later that what had happened was, that the Air Force Mess hall was exceptionally busy that night. I could've confirm this. Anyway, they had started to run out of food and instead of heating up a large can of **Green Beans**, that they then dumped, directly into a steam table line pan and served it.

They didn't really have the safety standards for food that we have today. They didn't have "Serve-Safe" or any other training regarding proper reheating or holding temperatures, etc. Let me tell you, I've always taken precautions since then when cooking. The botulism bacteria were introduced into the can, thru a small crack that was caused when the can was dented. That was combined with not heating it up to 165 degrees or higher to kill any existing bacteria. End result. Massive food poisoning.

Later on I became a certified instructor and Proctor for the National Restaurant Association. I

teach food safety and give the national test. I hope no one ever has to experience what I experienced that night. It was bad enough as an observer, thank you God that I didn't get the hands on training this time.

My, my.....we are almost done with language school but there was one more thing.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

How many people get to meet and party with a rock star?

I did.....I did!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

If you're this far into this book I guess it's safe to tell you "I did do drugs, and yes I did inhale. I did do acid. I considered it "self-medicating". Trust me, eat a good hit of acid and 24 hours later "normal" isn't just all right, it's wonderful! You quickly learn to appreciate it. The normal that is.

Like most in the 60's and 70's, I smoked pot and did other things. I couldn't drink. I'm one of those people that if I have 3 drinks I'm drunk. 4 drinks or more and I are

MR PIGS,

MR NOT

OSAR

LIB

MR PIGS

*Now you know why I didn't
want to bring this up initially!*

going to be deathly ill.
Never would be an alcoholic
that's for sure. So I
substituted. One vice is as
good as another is my
philosophy.

No, I DIDN'T GET STUPID
AND I DIDN'T REGRESS I
THINK.....

Let's find out:

1ST PHRASE

Translation

Hukt on fonics wrkt 4 me!
Hooked on Phonics
worked for me!

2nd

Phrase

They are pigs,
They are not,
Oh yes they are,
Well I'll be,
They are
pigs.....

"I never did understand how a person or group can think that their vice is acceptable and yours is not. Isn't it true that no matter what the vice (cooking, eating, shopping, drugs, alcohol, sex, etc.) it doesn't matter, if it's brought to an extreme it's a bad thing!"



My friend Kurt Lindsey and I partied and were room-mates at DLI. I imagine that he still wants to kick my ass for missing out on this particular day. Poor bastard, he had CQ that day. Anyway, what I also need to explain to you is that this type of "activity" had to be done very discreetly. After all, we had security clearances, and were part of M.I. (military intelligence). Shame, Shame.....show me a good interrogator and I'll show you someone that's been around. How can you understand people if you don't experience what they do? It was a good argument anyway.

Back to the story.....since Kurt had duty and I was bored I decided to take my bike for a ride. I ended up in a small town about 30

miles from Monterey. Its name was Castroville. It's the artichoke capitol of the world or so they claimed. I stopped at a small diner in town to have a bite to eat and take a break from riding.

Castroville could not have had a population of more than five or six hundred. It was a one lane farm town, whose street rolled up at night from the look of it. I parked my bike in front of the diner and went in.

Anyone that has ridden a bike along Highway 1 in California knows that, along the Pacific Ocean it stays about 50-70 degrees depending on if the fog has rolled in or not, but if you go 10 miles in land, say to Salinas, the temp jumps 20-30 degrees.

Castroville was inland like this and it was hot/summer time weather. The diner was air conditioned and felt great. I sat down at the counter and ordered a burger and soda from the waitress. I grabbed a paper and started to read while I waited for my meal.

Never in a million years would I have expected to happen, what happened next. Stevie Nicks and the entire group from Fleetwood Mac came walking thru the door of that diner. This is a poduck town in the middle of nowhere. What the hell are they doing here?

They



came
in and sat
down next to me

at the counter and ordered meals just like me. It must have been 10 minutes or more before Lindsey Buckingham turned to me and asked me: "Where's your robe man?" I gave him a blank look and he continued "By the look of your head, your either joining the Hare Krishna's, you have pubic hair on your head and you had to get rid of it; or you're just confused."

I explained to him that I was an interrogator and that I was in language school in Monterey learning Spanish. That struck a chord. The reason they were there was, to sing at a benefit concert for the International Brotherhood of Migrant Farm Workers (I have no clue if that is a perfect recollection of the name but you get the idea). It was a concert designed to bring attention to the poor pay and working

conditions of

**Fleetwood Mac at
their concert in 2013
in London**

Mexicans coming up and working during harvest season in California. At that time, farm owners made migrants work in squalid conditions that almost approximated slavery. Americans were socially conscience but that would quickly wane and stay slow throughout the 1980's. Too bad really, don't you think?

Mexicans, Spanish, we had something to talk about. We ate our meals and relayed stories about one another, traveling, etc. They

This is what the coast of California looks like all the way from San Luis Obispo to Oregon.

One of the most spectacular drives in America.

had just gotten back from a tour of Europe and, it must have been different for them to talk to someone who had been there and understood what it was like.

Things led from one thing to another, and I told them that I had 10 hits of orange sunshine, on sugar cube that was just bonkers. They offered to buy it but it was Fleetwood Mac for god's sake. I gladly gave it to them.....just for the opportunity to party with

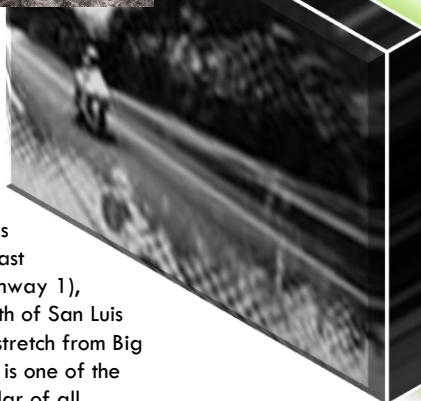


them. Boy, did we party!





One of the most scenic and beautiful highways to drive in the entire United States is the Pacific Coast Highway (Highway 1), anywhere north of San Luis Obispo. The stretch from Big Sur to Carmel is one of the most spectacular of all.



was hilarious. The waves were really crashing in the background, but the thing that strikes a chord most was the odor of decay from

all the kelp and seaweed that was washed ashore. It was nasty.

This is where we tripped. I can't imagine what the people on the road above us were thinking when they drove by.

I'm dressed in a tuxedo shirt and blue jeans, short hair, on a motorcycle, and there are the people in Fleetwood Mac, dressed up like an album cover, and we're all climbing the rocks and cliffs above the beach, but below Pebble Beach Golf Course.

We played army while the girls did their thing below. It

We must have played for about an hour and then we tired. I told them about a really cool place down in Big Sur they would love and that I had a friend that had a cabin up in the hills above town.

We decided to go and loaded up and headed south. After about 20 miles of the 50 we needed to go, the fog rolled in and it slowed us to a crawl.

I kept losing them around curves and stretches of straight away but I'm sure my visibility was better than theirs, because my eyes didn't

get



condensation on them from the fog.

Somehow, some way I lost them and never saw them again. I wondered all sort of things about what happened to them, but sometimes it's better to just move on.

They didn't die that night, and I had a great time with them.....thanks guys.....you're one in a million!



Elvis Presley died of an overdose just a month later in August of 1977. I went from feeling like a king to saying goodbye to the "King" I didn't mention it earlier but I lived for a very short time in Mendenhal, TN just a mile from Graceland in Memphis, I loved his movies and all his music!

Long Live the King!



Chapter 13

“Graduation....Marriage.....A trip to Peru.”



There was another Interrogator at DLI, and he had attended Interrogation School with me in Arizona. I remember that his first name was Michael but, for the life of me, I can't remember his last name. He was in his early 20's when I met him, but you could picture him in 20 years being a professor at Yale or Harvard. He was a genius, spoke 9 languages, and played the guitar and Middle Eastern Centaur. He was a spectacular individual who made everything seem effortless. Plus, he was always happy. It was like he had some secret for cosmic happiness that the rest of the world was not privy to.

He was one of the few people I've met that I felt humbled to be around. I excelled through a combination of experiences and schooling; he did so thru

raw talent. It was truly something to see, and he was wonderful to listen to.

Now he knew 2 girls that worked out of the Peruvian Consulate in San Francisco. Only he would. Another interrogator friend of ours had sent away with 10.00 for an "ordination from the Unification Church" as part of a joke and he became an ordained minister. No joke. He could perform ceremonies, weddings, etc. This was all for just 10.00. That was crazy.



Now.....it got crazier. Michael had married one of the girls who worked at the consulate and her father had given him \$10,000.00 to do so. Not only that, but he was getting ready to go to Peru to meet the new in-laws, all expenses paid. 2 weeks in Lima, all expenses paid, plus ten thousand to spend when you get there? No shit? Where do I sign up? I had heard about scams like this and had been warned in army training films. But rather than just jump into it, I decided to wait to see what happened to him. I thought that was being wise.

He had taken a different language course at DLI and

had graduated almost a month before I did. It was normal practice to take 30 days leave after language school before you reported to your first "working" duty station either here or overseas.

Michael graduated and disappeared. We assumed he was gone/ordered out to his next duty station. It wasn't so. He showed up 2 weeks late and he had one hell of a story to tell.

He had married this girl and indeed went to Peru. When he got there he was treated like a king and given every hospitality. He said it was awkward at first but later he understood why. Oh yea, he did get the ten thousand cash that he had been promised upon arriving.

At that time inflation in Peru was running 700 - 800% monthly (not annually). The currency was going down the tubes with the economy. Counter-fitters were making better paper money than the government. This didn't help matters any because the economy was flooded with worthless paper.

The middle and upper class in Peru had a couple of options open to them. They do nothing and watch their wealth disappear, or they try to get it out of the country. Legally, they couldn't just send it out. The government would not allow it. It's called "capitol flight" and

governments don't like it because it destabilizes a currency. They also don't like it because in a military dictatorship liked they had there, they couldn't control the middle class and wealthy if they had a means to escape.

Escape was not an option if you had to go poor!

So what do you do? One solution was marrying your kids off to foreigners and allows them to leave Peru. Send money overseas monthly to "support" them and start stashing your wealth in a stable country. Also, this allowed them to convert Peruvian "Solis" to dollars. Always a good thing since the government did not allow the normal Peruvian, to do this, at any government or private financial institution. The majority of these exchanges were done on the black market anyway.

Everything that was promised to him was delivered as promised. The next one was offered to me. The question was, "am I crazy enough to do it, and do me really want to do it?".....um.....ok I told him with a grin on my face.

Was there ever any question? Come ON.....who else could or would? Oh yea, tomorrow too early?

3 days later I was in San Francisco and got married at

the Peruvian Embassy. I was immediately issued a travel visa and less than 3 days later I was standing in the airport in Lima, thinking, here I go again.

God, how rude. I just realized that I haven't introduced you to my new wife. I've only referred to her as "her and she". My apology. Ladies and Gentlemen my new bride, Violeta Jesus Munoz of Miraflores, Peru.

This was an arranged marriage in case I forgot to tell you. What I did not realize when I agreed to this marriage (I understood the political and social issues involved), but what I didn't know was that her father (god bless his soul, Teofilo Munoz was one of the kindest and gentlest men I have ever met, and it was a real pleasure to know him), would have paid 20K to get rid of his daughter. She had to be the bitchiest woman I ever met and combined that with being dog homely, she had a face for radio, and you had a mail order bride because one would have married her otherwise.

Oh well, got a free trip and ten thousand. You can't have everything can you. By the way, Mike's wife was beautiful. Now that I look back I was baited into all of this....ha ha.

I'd marry 10 more ugly women for a chance to take that trip 10 more times.

Violeta's family knew how bitchy she was and were sympathetic to my plight. She had a younger brother Fernando, who was 19 at the time. He was the one who showed me what Peru was all about. He really wanted to come to the United States and I sympathized. He was intelligent, well educated, and I knew that his opportunities in his own country were limited at best.

Lima, Peru. The city had a population of 5 million in 1977. You drove thru 5 miles of tin and cardboard shanties from the airport to here. Haves and Have not's eh?



In 1977 there was only one type of music being played world-wide. I loved it for dancing but I personally hated it otherwise. It was DISCO. Not only was it the dance season but it was dead in the middle of it. What was the most popular drug for the bar scenes in the United States? You guessed it, cocaine.....i.e.....C.o.. c...a.i..n..e. The 100.00 dollar a gram, make you dance all night long drug.

All right class, what are the names of the two countries most responsible for the

export of cocaine to the United States and the rest of the world? Columbia is one and Peru is the other.

I was in Lima Peru, and American Interrogator/Military Intelligence, above top secret security clearance, now married to a Peruvian, on a beach below Lima, dancing in an open air, thatch bar, snorting cocaine, and waiting for the sun to rise.

I do remember a couple of things from that night. I remember that I couldn't feel my nose, throat, or stomach (we had snorted 4 grams overnight) and wondered how bad a thing that was, plus I remember wondering how Leavenworth was because I was surely going to end up there.

We stayed 4 days in Lima, and then he and I traveled alone to Cusco. He wanted to show me the Andes Mountains as well as a place called Machu Pichu.

We took a twin propped plane from Lima to Cusco that seated 8 people. It was a rough ride and, you never saw 8 people so ready to leave a plane, as we were when we touched down in Cusco.



For 2 centuries Cusco was the last civilized outpost before entering the amazon jungle in that area. From there east over the Andes laid the Amazon Basin and uncharted jungles.



It's on top of the world, with an elevation of

_____. It did take a day to get used to the altitude breathing wise. A lot of people don't know that cocaine was always used by the Indians as a stimulant but it's more important property was as a bronchial dilator. It opened the breathing veins and tubes and increased the intake of oxygen.

Whenever you live above 10,000 feet that's an important consideration. Ask your car or any baker. Anyway, they took it so they could live and work at the highest of altitudes.



I really didn't care for many Peruvian dishes other than ceviche. I did go to a

McDonalds in Lima, but it wasn't the same. I'm not sure it was beef. In Cusco we found a small restaurant that had advertised "American Hamburgers w/Cheese" i.e. hamburguesa Americana con queso. It sounded like a little bit of heaven.

It wasn'tplain and simple. They didn't have a clue. The waitress served

On the left
was your
typical Inca
Bride in
Ceremonial
Costume.
Below is the
Cusco
Amphitheater.

me what looked like a hamburger, with Peruvian goat cheese, and a fried egg on top. It was terrible. But, she was so proud of it, I didn't have the heart to tell her that it wasn't even close.

I did ask her what kind of meat it was. I half expected it to be monkey meat or lama or alpaca anyway. They were all plentiful. She told me no that it was beef. I guess the look on my face gave me away because she

offered to show it to me.
Cool, I get to go into the
walk-in of a Peruvian
restaurant. I was curious to
find out what kind of stuff
they had in there.

She did not bring me into the
kitchen to see the meat. She
did not bring me into a
freezer or cooler either. She
brought me out back behind
the restaurant. Oh my
god.....
....you will not
believe.....
.....
.....



.....what I was staring at.
HANGING IN THE TREE WAS
A SIDE OF BEEF. The entire
outside was black and putrid
looking. Flies and other
insects were swarming all
over it and you could see
maggots, crawling over the
surface.

I almost gagged and thought
about the sandwich I had just
eaten. Guess I would mark
this restaurant off my list of
favorite places to go or
recommend. You know what I
mean?

She was obviously proud
of it. That's what I couldn't
understand. How could you
be proud of THAT? When in
doubt, what do you do?
Stop.....Listen.....Learn.
And that is exactly what I did.
The lady was not some
ignorant peasant like I had
assumed. She probably knew
more about food safety
under those conditions than I
did. She was trained in food
safety and had a culinary
degree, but I didn't find out
that little fact until later.

***So the question is: "Why
was a side of beef hanging
in the tree looking like it was
rotting, but being served?"***

The answer is: It was being
cured in a manner proven
over hundreds of years.
Refrigeration is a relatively
new contrivance and even in
the 1970's many places in
Central and South America
did not have electricity or
refrigeration. If you did have
it you couldn't depend on it
like here. You never knew
when you would have a

brown out or black out.
Service was never
predictable. If you can't rely
on it you had to find an
alternative.

The Peruvians were able
to freeze most of the year
because of the altitude they
lived at in Cusco. This wasn't
possible in the tropic
lowlands. The other method;
"The Fly Method" for lack of
a better term, was used all
over South America.

Here's how it worked:

1. The meat is hung in
the sun once the
hide is removed.
2. The outside
layer
dehydrates
rapidly from
being in the
sun. The
inside meat
does not.
3. The meat attracts
flies and other
insects that start to
feed, lay eggs, and
literally change the
color of the outside
layer of meat from
red to black.
4. This activity
increases the ph. of
the outside layer
and makes it very
acidic. This acidity
is very similar in the
acidity caused by
smoking meat such
as ham, or fish. If
you change the
acidity out of the
danger zone, then

meat cannot rot. It
will cure instead.

5. This cured product
is then used for
about a month by
cutting off the
outside layer and
getting at the meat
underneath. After
a month the rest
would be taken
upward and frozen
or dehydrated in
jerky products with
an unlimited life
span. Smart for
pre-civilized society
don't you think?



Onward through the fog ok?

To get to Machu Pichu you
have to take a 1890 steam
locomotive out of Cusco down
the mountains, an into a
valley that the tracks
followed the 70 miles to the
Inca fortress. There was
nothing about the trip that
would qualify as acceptable
for the faint of heart. Do you
remember the movie with
Kathleen Turner (met her by
the way, she is from
Springfield, Mo) and Michael
Douglas, "Romancing the
Stone", I couldn't describe it
any better. Here's an ancient

steam locomotive with 6 even older passenger cars, getting ready to go down a mountain that's steep as hell? Oh buddy, didn't know about the wisdom of all that. Oh well, you know me.....never give up and never surrender.

That was a train ride for the books. This train stopped at every watering hole, curve, or place it decided to. There were no stations. People would stand along the tracks until the train came. The train would stop, they would board or get off, with all their belongings (including sheep and livestock in the passenger cabin), and the train would continue. No problem. Typical third world country scenario, and I'd seen a lot of them.

There was something that bothered me on the way about halfway thru the trip. A young girl had boarded in Cusco and been traveling with us the whole trip. She was obviously very, very pregnant. She traveled alone and you could tell she was pretty stressed about it. I felt bad for her.

That poor girl had a miscarriage right there on the train while we were moving along. She non-chalantly wrapped it up in newspaper, cried over it a little, and threw it out the window into the river that runs along the tracks. I gasped. I turned and looked at Fernando who had seen the same thing. He lightly touched my arm and

whispered "She didn't have a choice". Real poverty takes away our humanity. Survival, day to day dictates everything. You see it on the commercial for all these organizations asking for money. It's different when you are surrounded by it. It will break your heart. It's not the poverty that does the breaking, it's the knowledge you can't do anything about it. Only a stupid man thinks he can save the world (excluding Jesus of course).

About 3 miles from the fortress we had to stop. The train gradually slowed down in the middle of nowhere and then came to a complete stop. Not a word was spoken. It was kind of creepy. My first thought was terrorist. After all, this is the area where the Shining Path was operating. I thought oh great. They'd just love to get ahold of an American Special Forces Interrogator....Oh yea that would make their day for sure! It didn't turn out to be anything quite that ominous. It was kind of serious



however. We saw everyone getting off the roof with their belongings and start walking in the same direction that the train was traveling in. Next, we saw people getting out of the cars ahead of us and start doing the same thing. What was up? There wasn't any gun fire, that ruled out terrorist Para-military, so what could it be?

It didn't take that long to get there walking. It was beautiful actually. I was traveling with a backpack, as was Fernando, so it was easy for us.

I've included pictures so you can see what the place is like. It is unique to say the least.

Can you believe the luck? Avalanche.....it had taken out a section of the track and the train couldn't go any further. I wonder if Americans would have the common sense to just start walking, but they did. They didn't even hesitate. We looked at each other and yep, we did the same.



I have to describe a moment that occurred there. It was a Kodak moment and like normal, could have never, ever been planned or anticipated.

Nobody knows how the Incas were able to build this place with the technology of their time. There are a lot of theories. When you see it you won't care. You will only be amazed.

This place is built at the very, very top of two mountains that attach from their basis, until almost to the top. You can see it in the picture below:



The temperature at this high up is cooler than the jungle below. This causes a cloud cover in the early mornings. It makes for beautiful sunrises. When you are up there, the sun rises up thru the clouds and looks like it is coming up, not on a horizon but out of the jungle itself. It's a wonder to see. So here I am sitting on top of one hilltop alone and I'm getting ready to watch the sun rise. I was really wishing that I had a joint. That would have made the morning perfect. No luck though. Didn't even have a roach.

There across the way on the other mountain top was another dude and he looked like he was rolling a joint.....no way.....hallucination based on lack of oxygen? I didn't know, but there wasn't any way that could be happening. I looked harder. I sure did look like it.

A timid soul would have stayed where he was and left the man alone. Timid is not a word I would use to describe myself. I got up I just couldn't help myself. Spent 5 minutes walking to the other top, and introduced myself In Spanish. He responded in English "Sorry man...I don't speak espan...yol. You knew immediately he was from Texas. He had half a joint smoked and the other half was in between his fingers. He saw me staring at it and he laughed. "You want a hit

He pulled a bag out of his backpack that must have weighed a pound. I wondered if he was on that hill top waiting on a DC-3 to smuggle him and that bag out.....no, just a thought.

He pulled out a pack of papers that I swear were 12" long. No shit, and can you believe it, they were red, white, and blue, striped, just like the American flag. You have got to be kidding me? What are the odds? There



man?" He queried with a chuckle. I said "Oh yea....I was just over there thinking I wished I had one of my own".

must be a god, and (I WAS NOT ON THE SHIT LIST).

Can you imagine a more perfect moment. You can't dream or plan it; it was the spontaneity of the moment seeing the sun rise up thru the clouds, a little buzzed, at one

with the world and the
Universe. Thank you God.
Who gets opportunities like
this?

From here it was pretty much



hard to top.....back to
Lima...and home... It was time
to get back to my career.
Time to get to Ft. Bragg,
North Carolina, and actually
work as an Interrogator. Uh
Ra.

Onward thru the Fog!

Chapter 14

***“Uh
Ra.....
.....I
want to be an
Airborne
Ranger
(singing) I
want to live a
life of
danger.....
....”***

I had to return to Monterey before heading off to North Carolina. I had to get my things packed, get orders, and depart. This was the normal departure routine for a soldier.

Over the last year I had acquired way too many personal things to travel by motorcycle. I sold it and bought me an old Chrysler station wagon. Lord it was ugly. Almost as ugly as the stray I picked up before

leaving. How ugly was it? It was this ugly:

No, that wasn't the dog but it was at least that ugly, maybe uglier. I think butt ugly would be an accurate description. Poor Dog. Talk about a hard lot in life. How could someone not feel compassion for it?

Did I mention before I was a pretty good mechanic? I think so. It wasn't always the case. Let me give you an example of what not to do before a long road trip. First I'll list the things to do and then the things you do not want to do. Pay attention, could save you an engine.

Things to do before a road trip to your vehicle

- ✓ Check the air in your tires.
- ✓ Check the radiator fluid.
- ✓ Check the oil and change if necessary.
- ✓ Change the points (older vehicles)

- ✓ Adjust the carburetor (older vehicles)
- ✓ Clean the car. You won't have an opportunity after it's packed.
- ✓ Fill with premium gas.
- ✓ Pack the vehicle.

these parts disintegrate under high temperature while running thru the mountains around Ashville, North Carolina. I guarantee this can happen.

The car and the dog stayed in Ashville, and I continued by Greyhound Bus to Ft. Bragg. Not a perfect landing but you do what you can.

These are pretty normal things that all road wise drivers know. Now things you don't do.



Do not leave the very tiny, little, itty-bitty screw that holds points, in the engine after you drop it when you were changing the points. Do not, I repeat do not allow it to stay there and assume that it has dropped all the way into the oil pan. If you do not remove it, it will (and I speak from personal experience) break the distributor drive gear, damage the cam shaft that runs the distributor, which will finally destroy the rest of the engine when



Ft. Bragg is the home of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 18th Airborne Corps. Every other unit on base is

assigned to these two parents if you will.

Attached to it the Air Force has Pope Air Force Base. It's huge and the planes are huge also. You have C-130's for parachute ops, all the way up to C-5A Galaxy Starlifters. These bad boys can carry 3 tanks at a time and deliver them anywhere in the world. You could spend the day just watching all

*We directed
the fight
against the
Sandinistas
and the
Cubans from
Ft. Bragg,
N.C.*

*Teams from 7th
Special Forces
and 4th
Psychological
Operations
Group (me)
developed and
disseminated
propaganda
for use in this
campaign.*

the activity and different
aircraft.

My first duty assignment
as a new interrogator
was the 218th M.I.

Detachment. This is a
military intelligence unit
that provided
interrogation services to
18th Airborne Corps and
7th Special Forces
Group. We were all
airborne (red berets)
and if you were on a
tactical mission with 7th
(Green Berets) you never
heard the end of it.

I'll tell you what I told
them. The beret is
actually a brain sucking
instrument developed by
the French and Nazi's
during collaboration in
1945.

Once the beret is
stuck to the head it
begins the sucking



process. This process is
painless of course
because the brain has no
actual nerve endings. It's
kind of like when a leech
attaches to you. You

never feel it until you have to pull it off.

Continuing, after a short period of time (it depended on the beginning intelligence of the individual who wore

intelligence. You will be ruined and incapable of rational thought forever and ever.

It was peacetime but Nicaragua and the Sandinistas were going



the beret) the brain would begin to deteriorate. As it does so it changes color. It goes from the red of passion to the green of

hot and heavy. We spent most of our time on this issue. The main focus of our team was Latin

“Teddy built it, and jimmy gave it away. What the hell was he thinking?”

putrescence. There is one other stage past this one and it's the final stage. After everything is gone out of the skull, and the individual is incapable of rational thought, it turns black. When this occurs, we call them RANGERS. There is no hope of return to

America and 18th Airborne Corps pretty much ran USSOUTCOM I Panama (that is U.S. Southern Command) and they in turn ran all military and political operations in the southern hemisphere out of Panama and the Canal Zone.

When Jimmy Carter gave the Canal away in 1976 most of these operations were moved to Bragg, because we did not trust the Panamanians. This was for good reason, and I'll tell you about it in a little while.



While I was stationed at Ft. Bragg, I went to this area dozens of times on research missions and to develop propaganda to be used against the indigenous population. I'm trying to do things in chronological order so I'll get to them in just a little while.

Chapter 15

“Behind the Green Door”

Is there such a thing as “self-induced clinical schizophrenia?” If there isn’t there should be. I tried it and it worked for me for 7 years. Since the 1970’s many families have had to get second jobs just to make ends meet. Moonlighting became the norm instead of the exception.

Soldiers aren’t any different. You could live on an enlisted wage but you would never have enough. You ask enough of what? I’d answer, enough of everything.

I had a second job for almost the entire 7 years I was at Ft. Bragg. I wasn’t looking for it when it appeared. I didn’t necessarily want it. But at 21 years old, who would turn it down?

I’ve never had the descriptive adjectives.

“Normal” or “conventional” used to describe me or my life. Normally, its “abnormal” and “unconventional” that are used. It’s good to know looking back that I was consistent is my unconventionality. You’re going to love this.....

If you’ll remember, at the end of the last chapter I had sold my motorcycle, bought a car, lost the car and ended up arriving at Ft. Bragg, flat broke and busted. I didn’t have transportation and I ended up having to move back into the barracks after living on the outside for over the last year. It was a culture shock to be sure.

You have to understand that the only people who lived in the barracks were those soldiers who were too poor, or too stupid, to be able to live off base. Housing in supplemented in the military but only if barracks are not available or you are married.

I really have never considered myself prejudice and I don’t care what you’re race or national origin are, we are all unique in our own way, but I’m here to tell you that the military is filled with

the dregs of society for the most part.

There are those of us who joined because we wanted to or we believed in what we were doing. That is the exception and not the norm. Most are there because they had to and they didn't want to be there. The barracks were not the fun place to be.

I spent a lot of time in downtown Fayetteville, just to not be in the barracks. Never was a drinker but I headed down to the titty bars to shoot pool and flirt with the girls. I met a kid there one night that changed my life more than anything else previously. That was saying a lot. He set me on a path that you will never imagine in your wildest dreams. I'd have put the odds at a million to one or something like that.

Dayrl, (that's the proper spelling) was 19 when I met him. He had dropped out of school when he was in 8th grade and left home to make his own way in the world. He kind of looked like a greasy version of Journey's lead singer. The other point you have to picture in your head is that you will always see him in a cheap leather jacket. When I say cheap, I mean cheap. Knock offs and things like that were what he hustled to make a living.

That's pretty much how I met him in the first place. He was in this little Korean bar trying to sell shit to the G.I.'s. It was probably a payday but I don't remember for sure.

Here's what I do remember. Daryl walked up to the pool table where I was shooting a game. I had just finished a shot and he tapped me on the shoulder. This dude wanted to sell me a leather coat. He told me he had a trunk full of them and I should come out and take a look. I had a little extra money in my pocket so I agreed.

All of the strip joints and drinking places in Fayetteville are located downtown on one road referred to as "the strip" for obvious reasons. It's busy every night 24/7. A lot of traffic, and a lot of drunk soldiers were always cruising up and down the strip. Of course, that meant the police were always doing the same thing. Soldiers were easy marks and easy money from law enforcements point of view. Arrest a soldier and you were guaranteed to get paid. The government would take it out of the soldiers pay before the soldier even saw the money.

I stepped out of the bar with Daryl and right there in front of god and country he pops the truck on his LTD and I said "Oh Shit". I took a few steps back and looked up and down the street. I was looking for cops. I wasn't

very interested in going to jail that night.

Here I am, a new interrogator, at a new duty station, with a security clearance, and I'm standing beside this stranger, on a busy street and he's got a trunk full of clothes, guns, booze, whatever you could want. The only thing I wanted was to get away because I knew I was going to jail for sure!

Without hesitating, maybe without stepping, I was back on the sidewalk. I quickly said "no thanks" and turned around to leave. I'll never forget his laugh. Daryl had one of those laughs that you knew was genuine. He could get himself laughing so hard he'd fall on the ground. I'm talking about just from amusing himself because of a crazy thought. I loved to hear him laugh.

He obviously saw the panic in my eyes and that got him started. It started slowly at first, but built to the point that he was leaning on the car with one hand, laughing and holding his gut with the other hand.

It felt like forever but it was only seconds. What I wanted to know was what the hell was so funny? This asshole had no clue what I stood to lose if I got caught with stolen shit or drugs.

The sheer audacity of it to boot. He didn't have any discretion at all. Was he stupid or something? He didn't appear to be. Just a greasy looking, Italian mafia, want-to-be, with nothing exceptional to offer. Boy, you know what they say about first impressions: *"they aren't always true"*.

Once I got to know him and the "business" I understood a word he used after this first encounter. The word was "Grifter". Sounds like someone who wraps gifts doesn't it.

A grifter in the true sense of the word, is a con artist and never stays in one place for very long. They take all they can from a mark and move on. Daryl wasn't exactly that way. Combine the "smoothness" of a grifter, with the "con capability" of a used car salesman, and you had Daryl.

It's how he survived since he was 14 on the streets. He perfected his art and taught me a thing or two that I applied to my "day job" later on.

He explained that the cops wouldn't stop. He knew them all by first name and that what he had was "boosted". I wasn't very smart as far as all this went. I had no previous experience with this "world". Booster / Boosted, non-profit organization? I swear to god. How naive

could I be, now that I look back on it all? But, everyone had to start somewhere. By the way a “booster” is someone who goes into a store and steals things to sell. They don’t even open the packages. So, if something is “boosted” don’t buy it. They will take your get out of jail free card for sure.

He did end up selling me a coat. We saw each other a lot over the next 2 or 3 months and we became really good friends. We were a pretty good team. I was the more educated one, and the more “decent”/mid-west” looking one of the pair. He on the other hand, could deal with the sleaziest people on the planet and it not bother them. Years of experience? I don’t know. The bottom line is that he and I could deal with just about anyone anywhere. That came in handy as your about to finally find out.

We had been hanging out for a while like a said. I still lived in the barracks and they didn’t have cell phones back then. If you wanted to contact somebody you had to try to get thru on a payphone in the hallway. It was used

by everyone, so good luck with that. Trying to get hold of someone was a real hit or miss proposition. Daryl had been trying to get ahold of me for over 4 hours, when he finally got thru.

I met him downtown and I could tell he was upset. We sat down at the bar and ordered a couple of beers. After the waitress served us, he told me what the problem was. His grandmother had died. I didn’t even know he had a grandmother he was in contact with. He never spoke about anyone in his family and I never asked about it. I learned a long time ago that if someone doesn’t want to discuss a subject it was best to avoid it.

Come to find out Granny was unique in her own right. She had been in business for herself for over 40 years before she died. We attended the funeral and there must have been over 400 people at the funeral. I remember thinking his granny had a lot of friends.

Oh yea, she had a lot of friends. I mean A LOT of friends. Granny was a madam. That is right, I said madam and I didn’t have the chance to stutter on that one. She ran a whorehouse and had done it since WWII. To say that she was well connected in the community would have been an understatement to say the least.

After the funeral, we went to the reception and met a lot of people. I was still unsure about what was going on, but something was brewing for sure. All of these people were coming up to Daryl and introducing themselves. It seemed a little bit strange to say the least.

Daryl the young hustler changed to Daryl, "Pimp Daddy" overnight. His grandmother and left him as the sole beneficiary in her will. Only in the South could what happened, happen.

He was willed a whore house. The place, 8 girls, and everything associated with it. I didn't even know that something like that was possible. Honestly though, I had never really given it much thought. This presented him with a situation that had real potentials (good and bad). I was his best friend so he turned to me and asked; "Want to move in with me?"

My first reaction crazy enough was exactly that as the first time I'd met him at that titty bar; "Oh shit". Let's face it boys and girls, if I was freaked from a trunk full of stuff, can you imagine the thought of living in the whore house and getting busted. I would then lose my security clearance and job, and probably end up in Ft. Leavenworth. Not exactly what I had in mind at this point in my military career. Uncle Sam does not fuck

around when it comes to shit like that. I tried to come up with a way to say that, which would express the same feeling.....I couldn't do it. Sorry.

In my military career of less than 3 years, I had done drugs in the barracks, did acid with Fleetwood Mac, Married a foreign national for money (at first), traveled to a third world country and partied hard for 2 weeks without the military asking questions, and avoided setting up an import/export business with my new in-laws. They were really pushing hard for it, and I wish now that I had went for it. It could have made me rich legitimately. The problem was I saw a bigger potential for going to jail for smuggling or worse yet, being made a patsy to a drug smuggler out of Peru in the late 1970's. Oh yea, when I postponed the decision forever, they finally gave up. Personally, I felt that it had disaster written all over it for me... I always had a really difficult time saying "No" anyway.

In that short a period of time, that's a lot of bullets to avoid. Now, less than three months later, I wanted to do it again? This wasn't any 2 week adventure.....this was living in a whore house (totally illegal), it had a bar and served alcohol without a license (more and more illegal), and it had prostitution

and drugs. No, if something happened I wouldn't go to jail. I would be under the jail, and never see the light of day again. When the state was done with me the Army would finish the job. I would be looking at 30-50 years in Leavenworth for sure. That wasn't small time.

**How long would you
need to make a decision
like that?
Could you even consider
it? Would it even be a
novel thought?
If you thought yes, could
you actually do it?
If you were in my shoes,
what would you have
done?**

Do you really have to ask
what my decision was? I think
you would have needed an
atomic clock to measure the
micro-seconds, it was that
fast. What has been my last
line on many of the preceding
chapter? Off on another
adventure!!!!!!!!!!

Chapter 16

“Back to My Day Job”

I thought my night life was getting ready to rev up. It had nothing on the day job let me tell you. When I first got to the 218th M.I. Detachment, my primary job was document translation into English, and other “menial tasks”. These were designed to give the warrant Officer a better idea of an interrogators personality and capabilities. Leave it to an interrogator to set up a test like this. It was efficient.

It didn't take them long to realize that I wasn't the average new interrogator/trainee they normally got. I had two skills they really liked. They did everything they could to encourage my development of these skills.

Listening – I was a great listener. This wasn't by accident. Live around a bunch of foreigners speaking

another language or trying to speak English and you will learn to listen! If not, you make a fool of yourself.

Empathy - Having had to deal with so many different people and cultures, I had the capability to talk to a person, or be given a task to research someone, and I could quickly identify their susceptibilities, vulnerabilities, strengths, etc. All of this, without getting emotional or caring. That is what empathy is and how it varies from “sympathy”. By the way I'm not very sympathetic either.

Logical Mind - One thing leads to another then another.....on and on.... Not many people can do this. It takes a special skill. Ask any detective. It's not that others don't have a capability, it's that they don't have the patience or dedication to put in the time **and** the effort needed for quality analysis.

Perfect Language skill - An already developed skill level to a 5/5. My Spanish was considered Native.

Friendly/Outgoing - Like I mentioned before, I can talk to anyone, anywhere, about anything and enjoy it. Many don't possess this skill, especially not someone with intelligence. Geeks know a lot but can't interact socially. “Alpha” type personalities always try to take control (jocks/cops), so you have to

have just the right mix of experiences to make it work.

Because I excelled at these skills right off the bat, I was picked over many senior interrogators to fly to Panama, to provide support to 7th Special Forces, in some jungle in South America. Something had happened and US SOUTHCOM had sent for an A-Team and support, to a little country called Guyana. I was picked because I knew it, and had recently been in Venezuela. Venezuela is located just west of Guyana and it neighbors it.

We loaded up and were ready to depart Pope Air Force in less than an hour. We practiced these kinds of deployments all the time and kept a bag packed. All of knew that whatever it was it must be important. They put us in a C-5A Galaxy Star Lifter (this was the biggest and badist of all the troop movement aircraft available to the Air Force). We went thru our checks and loaded up. Wheels were up in 15 minutes and we were headed to Panama.

Our first stop was to be in Panama for briefings, more equipment as deemed necessary, and whatever else we might need. US SOUTHCOM maintained a

headquarters in Panama City proper after the Panama Canal was turned over to the Panamanians in 1976. They had representatives from each of the armed services, NSA, CIA, and a couple of others I couldn't identify.

We were to "possibly perform a rescue operation" for a US senator, visiting a foreign country not friendly to the United States. He had been missing 24 hours with no word since his arrival. Attempts had been made to contact him by phone and to contact the pilot of the leased aircraft. Both attempts had failed over and over. It was to be considered a hostile operation.

We waited on the tarmac for orders to go. They were waiting for pictures from a re-tasked satellite that normally was used to observe Cuba and Nicaragua. It didn't run on the same latitude and the re-tasking in those days took a while. We weren't in the digital age yet.

It didn't take too long to get our orders. We departed for Guyana at 0400 and were scheduled to arrive before sun up. We were going in weapons hot.....everyone considered hostile.....This was to be my first overseas mission. Boy, was I excited.....until we got there.



The Kool-Aid Container

The Main Community Pavilion

*This was the
Rev. Jim Jones.
A picture is
worth a
thousand
words or
damnations in
this case.*

*May he
Not rest in
Peace for this
atrocity!*



I don't know if you can tell but all those little white things are bodies. I didn't have a lot to do. There wasn't anybody left to translate for. Every single soul was dead, even wildlife, insects, and birds that drank the Kool-Aid, were lying

This is what we saw from the air as soon as we arrived. Not a soul was moving. It was eerie like straight out of a movie!



It's not even been 20 years and the next generation doesn't even remember this atrocity!

around dead. You got to question how a parent could do something like this to their kids. What kind of cult mind control makes it possible? Most important.....how can people be that stupid and gullible?

I found out way back that you shouldn't try to second guess the actions of a stupid person or try to figure out why they did what they did. Better to just accept it as a fact and let it go.

By no means do I think there are a lot of stupid people. I just think that everyone does stuff that is stupid. There is a difference I hope. I never had a single nightmare about what I saw.

It was bizarre in that when you see that many dead bodies there are usually blood and guts everywhere. Destruction of buildings and vehicles and even a fire or two should be burning. It's Not what we experienced. No ,Not like that. It was more like you will see after a chemical or biological attack. Just quiet. I would be very, very quiet.

David Koresh tried to follow in Jim Jones's footsteps in Waco, Texas a while later. Do you remember that? I wasn't there, but the motivations of the people were eerily the same. Let me explain further. Before I do it, I want all of you to understand that I do not under any circumstances condone what they did. But being empathetic, I can understand it.

This is the way I saw and remember it. The first

question obviously is why were they there? The press didn't report it much, but the reason all of these Americans were living in Guyana was because the U.S. Government and the California State Government had persecuted and hounded this religious group to the point of insanity.

They were not the first nor will they be the last to die for their beliefs. We forget that because we tend to demonize anyone not like us. It's a pitiful world view and we have paid for it over the next 30 years.

It took us 3 days to pack everyone up and cleanup. The rest was history and you can read about it in **TIME** Magazine.

Chapter 17

“Learning to be a Pimp Daddy”



Do you remember the television series Starsky and Hutch? I know, it was really terrible. The picture I have in my mind right at this moment is of “Huggy Bear”. Can you

picture him? They made it into a movie a couple of years ago and this part was played by Snoop Dog. You know the part. He was the pimp/informer for Hutch.

No?.....All right. Well, how about “Trading Places” with Eddie Murphy, Jamie Lee Curtis, and Dan Akroyd, where they pick up a poor black guy and put him on Wall Street for a bet. Well, there was a scene in that movie where all three of them go to the Hooker’s Ball in Chicago. The scene cuts away and shows all of these pimps and hookers pulling up to the Waldorf-Astoria (or this type of hotel) in their Cadillac’s and El Dorado’s with 6” Platform Shoes, and of course the all-important “Pimp DADDY Hat”. This was



the essential all important accessory for any pimp daddy on the move. You cannot be bonifide pimp daddy without a bonifide “Pimp Daddy Hat”. No how, no way, it just wasn’t done.

Come on.....you know the rest of the accessories too, don't you? The Full length leather or rabbit skin coats were always popular. You had to have a wad of money with a gold money clip too. You could even use a cane to accessorize. It had a dual function after all. You can use it to beat your deadbeat stable whores or slap a few John's around. Your ensemble will be complete with a proper silk shirt that was required to have the ugliest



patterns, printed on it available at that time. That's it, you're done. Ready to begin?

Is this the picture you had in your mind when I told you about the whore house in the first place? Be honest now. I'll admit it was for me. There were a lot of pre-conceived notions that were not true I found out. Since, this chapter was going to be used

to describe my "training/indoctrination period into this new world, I'll go ahead and start with that idea.

PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS THAT AREN'T TRUE ABOUT A WHORE HOUSE

If I tried to debunk every single notion that wasn't true, we could be here a long time. I would like to cover a couple of little things that really shocked me.

The first thing that I expected was that all of these girls would be lying around in lingerie and skimpy little outfits. With any luck, I might even get to see a maid outfit or two. Everyone knows that you walk in, pick your girl, and go "hook up".

The reality of it was that I didn't have a clue. OMG me clueless? I'm not even a blond (just making a joke, no offense please).

LOGIC AND Common Sense

How many times a day do you hear "That's logical" or "she doesn't have any common sense?"

(I don't think most have any sense, common or uncommon, if you know what I mean).

Anyway, that's irrelevant. Using the example to the right, here, is the argument:

Whorehouse Revenue

A=soldiers; b=Other Customers; and c= Total Dollars. Therefore, $A+B=C$ Argument Correct T/F?

The correct answer is False. The correct ratio is 80/20 however 80% of the whorehouse revenue must come from people who have money. Therefore logically, a business will not be able to exist off the revenues of the soldiers. Therefore, logically following the argument to its conclusion we must determine that the above equation cannot possibly be true.

That's logic. Unfortunately, most people call what they think is obvious as "Logical or True" when in fact things are just the opposite.

Wham, bamb, thank you ma'am, leave your money on the night stand as you head out! Or, let me put it into poetry:

Do I have a future as a poet?

My Name is El Paco

I Work on a Rancho

I earn 5 pesos a Day

I Go See my Lucy

She gives me Some Pussy

And Takes my 5 Pesos Away.

I was kind of expecting mass production, you know get them in and get them out, type of mentality to exist. It didn't.

How many movies have we been shown over the years that depict the slimy motel room where they rent the room a 1/2 hour at a time? Or maybe in "Pretty Woman" with Richard Gere and Julia Roberts, where she says; "\$300.00 for the whole night" when he asked "How Much? Neither is very realistic, except in New York or Los Angeles. The reality is

that sometimes they would stay there but most of the time, the girl and the guy would just leave the place and come back later. It was safer for the whore house and safer for the guys.

Usually, they went out drinking or partying together before anything happened. This was a much more civilized way to do it than up north don't you think? They actually enjoyed each other's company. More like a Geisha. Even better, an escort in the true sense of the

"young/aggressive" men would want in the entire world. Sex SALES, we see it and hear it on television and the radio every single day of our lives. Logically, 20% couldn't be possible.

Go and get a cup of coffee, or stick your finger in a socket (whatever you do to get grey matter to fire) and think. In the middle of North Carolina, 50 miles from the nearest "major city", which group of people have the following. Most or all would be required I think:



word would be an apt description.

I expected the clientele to be young soldiers from Ft. Bragg (just 5 miles away). We would have rushes on their paydays (the 1st and 15th of each month). It wasn't.

Twenty percent at best. Yea, I think that would be the %. You have got to be kidding. You think I am lying to you right? Honestly, it may not have been even that. How could this be possible being right next to a military base? How, knowing that you're delivering the one commodity that most

- Enough income to be able to get rid of 50 – 100 dollars at a time and not worry about it.
- Not have a girlfriend and have a pocket full of money (almost impossible).
- Have the ability to disappear for 2-3 hours at a time to "hook up" during the day or night.
- There must be enough of you, to contribute the dollars needed to operate this type of business (prostitutes are definitely

prima donnas and high maintenance guys, if you know what I mean). That takes a lot of dollars.

FARMER JOHN – It's the guy you see going to the feed store on Saturday morning in that '65 Ford F-150 that should have been retired in the previous century. I swear to god. When I found out, I know I had to use my hand to physically close my mouth. There just wasn't anyway that could be possible. Is there?

Well sure just think about it. Who has the time and opportunity? The Farmer. Who doesn't spend a lot on a day to day basis? The Farmer. Who's married to butt ugly wives? The farmer... No, I'm sorry. I really didn't mean that. It was mean. Last who has wives that are tired of seeing their men because they have never left home? Never. It'll drive a farmer's wife wild. So, if her man wants to spend a few dollars and have some floozy pet on him. All the better, she won't have to do it. It's a win, win proposition.

I expected the average John to spend 20-30 dollars per "session". They didn't.

I mentioned before that most of that "activity"

occurred someplace else. The majority of guys were 50-70 and just wanted someone to be nice to them and pay them a little attention. They would sit and drink and visit and most of the time it didn't go beyond that. Look at it logically, everyone wants a kind word, or to be paid a little attention too (other than yelling, screaming, or ordering). Sex maybe, but do you really think it rated that high on the totem pole? At their ages? Companionship and a kind word are often worth a whole lot more!

I expected to ride around in a Cadillac that had wire spoke rims and maybe even curb feelers. We didn't. It was a Gran Torino Elite.

There were two rules that were always in force. First Rule - Guns will cause more problems than they solve. The Po Po knew about the whore houses, there was some harassment but it was more to get your attention than anything else. If you got caught with weapons they would hound you to the depths of Tartus. Not good.....Not g.....o.....o.....d!

The second rule was that why advertise? Stupid. Let the brothers do that. Ours was more a hospitality industry anyway. I'm here to tell you that I heard stories of girls who turned tricks with cops to get them off their back, or to gain favor with

them. I never saw it, or ever confirmed it. Law enforcement there was honest and fair. By the way that was Cumberland County, NC.

I expected for there to be a lot of problems from law enforcement. There wasn't. Except, at election time. It really wasn't any big deal. We knew they had to make a showing. It was all dog and pony though. Remember who the clientele were. Guess who had the power at the ballot box and in the back room poker games. Other than that, they pretty much left us alone. Of course, with all generalities, there were exceptions to the rule. Some of the girls actually deserved a little harassment whenever they would go off the deep end. Those moments did exist, I expected there to be a lot of drugs, and alcohol and that everyone would be fucked up all the time. There wasn't and they weren't.

I expected to need a weapon on me at all times to protect the "stable" from pimp wars or equivalent. I didn't and it didn't.

If only bought one gun the entire time I was living there. If I had bought more, I would probably be dead now and this story would have ended 20 pages ago.

As it was, I wished I had never saw that gun. Son of a Bitch shot me after I bought it. It was so cute. It was a little 32 caliber, 4 shot derringer.

It was perfect for the purse or pocket, and easy to carry around.

Again, most people's ideas of sex in whorehouses involves clips like in Caligula or some xxx movie where you have all of these beautiful people writhing on the floor naked, squirming, kissing, (just good clean fun! Ha ha). Don't get excited now. Calm down, let's get back to reality. Who were the people who came there? Do you remember? Do you really think that anybody wanted to see a bunch of 50 – 60 year old farmers wiggling around on the floor having sex? It wouldn't be pretty. As a matter of fact, I think that might be a pretty good recipe for a nightmare or major counseling. What was it that George Bush Senior used to say "Wouldn't be proper? Wouldn't be Prudent!"

Guess who was always looking for an exception to the rule? Oh yea, and I found a doozy on this one.

Chapter 18

Getting shot and deserving it!

There was another whore house just about 50 yards away through a patch of Carolina pines. It was ran by a couple of friends. Brandy and John (A real "john" not a pseudonym) were married and had ran the place next door for years. Brandy used to work for John and they ended up getting married. This was more common than you might think. Anyway, back to the story.

My taste in women has always leaned toward long dark hair, dark skinned, women. I've never dated or had sex with a blond in my life. I guess that's why I always gravitated toward Latin America. Go to Venezuela, either Caracas or Maracaibo will do. Everywhere are beautiful women with long hair, bright red lip stick, short skirts, just perfect. That's how I know there is a God. That is also how I know god is a Man. If God was a woman then all women would be ugly. I don't know of any woman that likes competition do you? Especially, not competition in that arena. On the other side of the coin all men would be good looking. With god as a man, you'd expect him to through in a few "uglies" just for the laughs. Come on.....it's possible!

God, I guess I had lived there at least 2 maybe three years when we were over at Brandy and Johns' having a few beers and just sitting around. I was dating a full blooded Cherokee at the time (Caroline Eagle (nmn)). She was 5'1 and a fiery little Indian from Tahlequah , Oklahoma. She was as sweet as could be whenever she was sober but, Let her get drunk and she was as mean as any human on earth. I learned later that there was a lot of truth about "Indians and firewater". I don't know if an actual study has been done but after meeting some of her family, I wonder about alcoholism being genetic as much as a social disease. You ever wonder that? During the time we were together, she shot me, stabbed me, wrecked 7 cars (1 driven off a bridge), and made me more miserable than any woman I have ever met (before or since). Mmmm,damn it the funny thing is, that I ended up marrying her. Can you believe it?

I want you to keep all of that in mind as I finish the story.....It was late afternoon and we were all pretty bored. Caroline was well on the way to being drunk. The old adage about "Indian's not being able to hold their liquor is true as far as I am concerned). She was on the couch talking to John and he was just listening.

I was sitting at the bar talking to Brandy. On a scale

of 1-10, Brandy would have been a 12. Jesus y Madre, she had the entire package. Looks and intelligence, and a wonderful personality all at the same time. God was having a good day, that day. She could have been Helen of Troy. Men would do battle over her. She was everything I ever wanted and married to John, the biggest, hairiest guerrilla you ever saw. He must have went 275 and all muscle, maybe 6'3. Anything over 5'5 to me is just ridiculous and excessive anyway.

Brandy came up with the idea of swapping partners. Oh yea.....oh no.....oh yea.....oh no.....I could see that it had all sorts of disasters written all over it.....Brandy is beautiful and I've wanted her from the first day I laid eyes on her.....oh yea.....Caroline's drunk.....oh yea.....she agrees?.....oh yea.....I told Brandy to ask Caroline and John, because I wasn't going to do it. Damn if she didn't actually do it. I didn't think she would.

I know I'm living in a whore house but, I've always been pretty conservative as far as sex has been concerned. I don't mean style, I mean multiple partners, orgies, that type of thing. I tried it once in high school and ended up getting

shot at. I didn't see any sense in going through something like that again, not if it could be avoided. That's what they call "wisdom" isn't it? But....but....But....Brandy is perfect.....oh.....u m.....ok, just this once.

Here it was a cross roads. I recognized it for what it was. Unfortunately, I knew that it was going to be an important decision, I just didn't have the "why" quite right. Yes, just like always the "Let Mikey Try It" came out and I jumped in with both feet.

They both agreed but it wasn't going to be a foursome. Brandy and I would go into one bedroom and John and Caroline in the other. My god my anticipation was almost palatable. I was kind of the perfect guy for running a whore house because I liked sex, but it wasn't the end all that it is with a lot of people. To me, sex without an emotional attachment or that anticipation that goes along with it, is pretty dull and boring. Hell, masturbation is a more effective use of my time and cost less. Guys, all you know that sex is going to cost you money one way or another. Either you go with "short term rental", long term lease, or marriage. No matter what, even if you just date, you pay. And pay.....and pay.....

Sorry, after being married 5 times that's kind of a sore spot.

I had fantasized about Brandy for a long time. Dreams that bordered on the erotic.....no.....but I had you going for a moment. We went into the back bed room and began to get busy. I knew in the first 5 seconds that Brandy was going to be exceptional at oral sex. She was 5'10 and had me pinned and under control shall we say in about 30 seconds. I was in heaven plain and simple. The culmination of my being.....one with the universe.

Now I ask you, how can something that perfect, where all the stars in the universe are in alignment, come crashing downwith nothing more than a look from another human being. How can that be possible and is it? Oh it is, I'm here to tell you.

HAVE ANOTHER WOMAN'S LIPS WHERE THEY SHOULDN'T BE AND HAVE YOUR WIFE/GIRLFRIEND (that's not misspelled) WALK IN. See, you now have the perfect mental picture. It all came crashing down in an instant, and I mean an instant. Caroline had opened the door, saw Brandy and me, slammed the door, and marched out the back door, going home.

The shit had definitely hit the fan. I jumped up, pulled up my pants, I hadn't even

had the time to take off my shoes. I'm sure I ran. Stopping at the bar to pick Daryl up, (I was going to need moral support). We both went next door and to home.

We got to the front door and turned and looked at each other. He spoke first "You first, she's your girlfriend." I couldn't argue with it. He stepped back and I stepped forward.

At that exact moment the front door opened and out stepped Caroline. Let me repeat that. Out came Caroline with the Derringer in her hand. Oh shit, that was all I could think. You could see the fire in her eyes. There wasn't any doubt. She was going to shoot. And, she had the gun pointed right between my eyes. She started cussing and stepping forward until the gun was pressed to my forehead. The trigger was cocked. Here was the *final Bullitt*.

I had an ace in the hole that she didn't know about. I had "super-secret/black ops, Ninja training. Oh yea, that's right. It was almost impossible to defend against, or so I thought. It was just like in the movies. Timed slowed to a standstill and I could see the thought to pull the trigger, coming into her brain.

I reacted instantly, my hand raised and I hit her wrist with a kung-Fu slap that would have made my

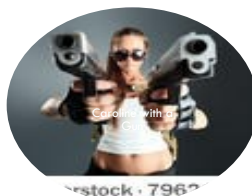
instructors proud. I could feel the triumph swelling in me.....success
SUCCESS.....BANG.
The gun went off just as the barrel cleared my head. My realization of success lasted about 1/100th of a second. That's the time it takes for a thought to fire. My first thought was "What's that flying through the air?" My next thought was, "Why is Daryl hopping around?" My attention turned to Caroline. The gun was smoking and she had a curious look on her face like "Oh Shit it actually went off." If I hadn't been gushing blood it would have been hilarious. A Kodak moment to be sure.

Want to know what happened? I'm not going to tell you. So there!

She had the nerve and the audacity to shoot off my little finger. She blew it off all

right. That was what I had seen flying through the air. Then after going thru my finger, the bullet hit the pine tree behind us, bounced off it, and hit Daryl in the back of the leg just in the muscle under the knee. She got two birds with one stone.

Daryl was hopping around on one leg and I was yelling "you stupid bitch" at Caroline, as I picked up my finger with my good hand. That was the absolutely, worse thing, I could say to her and I knew it. It's what her father used to say to her 24/7 when she was a kid, and was the equivalent of a red flag to a bull.



BOOM.....BO
OM. Daryl took off in one direction and I took off in another. How many rounds? Three....the gun only held four, and then finally the fourth shot.....boom. I was still alive. I didn't know the same about Daryl though. I turned and headed back. When I got to the clearing where the yard started and the woods ended, I slowed and looked around. No bodies lying around. That's

good. No pools of blood other than my own. That's good. Where was Daryl?

The next decision was a hard one as well. Do I go in and try to calm Caroline down or, do I try to find Daryl. I was bleeding, but not too bad, and I had my finger in my pocket. Caroline was probably looking for more bullets right then, so I chose the easier path. I ran. Come on now. Wouldn't you do the same? I've had people tell me that I should have went in and taken the gun from her immediately. I say to them, you didn't know Caroline. I was already CRIPPLED AND AT A DISADVANTAGE. She was even more pissed because I called her stupid.....I chose the correct decision. There is not a doubt in my mind.

I found Daryl sitting in his car, calmly smoking a cigarette. Can you believe it? I asked him about getting shot and he confirmed it. Yep, right leg. Right into the calve muscle. He showed it to me. There was a hole and you could see blood, but almost none. Somehow, some way it had went between the muscles and just stopped. The tree must have stopped the majority of the velocity of the bullet before it impacted his leg. He never went to the doctor and he still has the bullet in his leg to this day.

Me however, that was a different story. I'm pretty tough from all the stiches that

I've received in the past. *You have to go to the doctor* when you have a finger shot off, I'm sorry.

I had a dilemma. Remember my day job? How does an interrogator/translator with a top secret security clearance explain how and why he got shot, where he got shot, and the entire history of the last three years coming to light? That's a very big OH SHIT. Then again, how do I go to work Monday morning with no finger? OH SHIT. What do you do, what do you do?

Well here is what I did. We went next door to Brandy's and I started by washing the dirt and sand of my little finger. It's kind of like brushing your teeth if you have dentures, not quite right but you do it anyway. Once that was completed I packed it in ice, and told /asked Daryl if he could bring me to the base hospital. He said sure. He was actually pretty cheerful for just getting shot.

Wouldn't you think that I would need to go to the civilian hospital in Fayetteville? If I did this the military wouldn't know about it right? Wrong, just the opposite again. If you are in the military and you go to a civilian hospital with a gunshot wound, they report it to the base, you can bet money on that! Plus, who is going to pay the bill? Only a fool would try and fall into that trap I reasoned. No, better

to go to the base hospital and lie, tell them I was cleaning a gun, or some such nonsense, and take their heat for being stupid. It worked. I don't know how but it worked.

They were kind enough to reattach my finger for me. Told me I did well cleaning it in salt water and packing it in ice. I still have it today. Typing is a lot easier with it than without it I'm sure.

I had to spend the next 10 days in the base hospital, hooked up to IV's to prevent infection. The nice thing is that I was introduced to Steven King as an author by reading "The Stand" in just 6 days. I think I've read everything he's ever written since. I had survived my first experience with being shot. It wasn't my last, but that will come later.

Did I get in trouble with the Army? Of course, I told them I was at the weapons range and was cleaning my



weapon and reloaded it. When I sat it on the table it fell off and discharged. It wasn't the best lie, but it was

good enough. I received 30 days extra duty for sheer stupidity but that was it.

As for Caroline.....I'll tell you, but right now I have to go back to my day job...

Chapter 19

Meeting True Evil for the First Time

it was Cuba and the Sandinista's in Nicaragua.

It was all the rage, Regan was sending billions into Defense and he vowed to stop the Communist Expansion into Central America. We had a mandate from the President of the United States for god's sake. I had the pleasure of working with some really excellent and motivated individuals in PANAMA at US SOUTHCOM. I worked there as an analyst on my first round "in country". My area of specialty was the "Contra's" or "Counter-revolutionaries" that did not want to be communist. We



From 1976 until about 1985 defensive capabilities were aimed at the soviets and their expansion into our hemisphere. Today, it's been Cuba and Venezuela (President' Chavez), back then

supported them with money, arms, bullets, and intelligence in their fight against the Sandinistas. One of my main sources for intelligence was a marine colonel name LtC. North. His friends called him "Ollie" but his real name was Oliver. He said he was

named for *Oliver's Travel's* by his mother. He got in trouble later on too! The bad thing about being a point man, is that you are the lowest man on the totem pole and when the music stops, guess who doesn't have a chair. Boy, did he find out. They used him as a political scapegoat but he was true blue and 100% American. He did not deserve to be treated that way. It was wrong then, and it's still wrong today.

He was later accused of illegally funneling arms to the Contras using money earmarked for Iran. Thus, you had the *Iran Contra Affair*. It was the biggest scandal of the 1980's. I was privy to the inside information and he was set up. The music stopped and he didn't have a chair plain and simple.

Congress was after Regan but they settled for Ollie. He outsmarted the buttheads and still made good. I'm glad. If anybody deserved it, it was him. I have the highest respect for him and what he did. He followed his orders to the best of his abilities. The political implications and fallout are concerns of the politicians, not warriors.

I had a different job that I was responsible for. I was to research the head of the Panamanian Secret Police. His name was Manuel Noriega and our government was worried about him being in cahoots with Fidel in Cuba.

It turned out that this was in fact true. I spent 3 trips over 2 years just investigating him after Omar Torrijos (The President of Panama when Jimmy Carter gave them the Canal back in 1976). President Torrijos was a true patriot of his country and a man with true principals and ideals. Just like with Kennedy, the hopes of



Panamanians died when his plane mysteriously crashed into the jungle of Panama. The plane was never found. As soon as it happened, I was in country, and General Paredes assumed the position of President. He resigned soon after, from right wing death threats (coming from groups controlled by Noriega) nominated Noriega to the post even though he was not, the next senior man in the chain of command. What's up with that? It was called a "coup".

There are people who do evil things but that is different from a truly evil person. Manuel Noriega is/was a truly evil person. He murdered, killed, trafficked in drugs and prostitution and

robbed his country of its future. We did the right thing in bring him to justice. In case you haven't seen him lately:



***Doesn't look happy now
does he? Doesn't your
heart just bleed for him?***

I learned a couple of things that were important life lessons, when I was working down in Central America. I'll give you the most important one first. It's the most important because it involved guns and bullets again.

I can't count the number of times that I've traveled in the worst parts, of the worst cities, in the world without any problem. It's a matter of attitude and street smart and not looking like "prey". There is a distinct difference between looking like prey and being prey. Neither, is a good position to be in.

Another sergeant and I went down to start the first investigation working out of Ft. Clayton (this is on the Atlantic side). In order not to be photographed coming in and out of the base by the Panamanian Secret Police, we traveled on diplomatic passports and stayed in a hotel downtown. Not bad...not bad at all.

*In the Finest
Barbarian
Tradition, He
assassinated his
boss to ascend
to the
Presidency of
Panama*

We arrived in country at about 1400 hrs. or 2:00 in the afternoon. By the time we got thru customs and baggage, and to the hotel and checked in, it was already after 6:00.

The siesta or more appropriately called a

"slowdown" does occur daily between 1:00 and 5:00 more or less. People, no families, go out for dinner about 9:00 at night and people more or less start waking up and moving around after 6:00 p.m., after it starts to cool down, and the monsoon rains stop. That's another reason for the break. The monsoon rains are very predictable, and rain that we describe as a torrential downpour, are normal day in and day out.

What I'm leading to is that after we showered and changed and got settled in it was almost 9:00 and we went walking downtown. People were everywhere and the streets were very crowded. That's when it happened.

Sam and I had went into a McDonalds to eat and just walked out the door when this guy came running by. He was running as fast as he could as if his life depended on it. We heard shouting coming from the opposite direction and saw a Panamanian cop yelling for the guy to stop. He didn't. If you knew Latin American cops you wouldn't have stopped either. Sam and I jumped behind a VW mini-van and waited. It didn't take long to hear the sound of the machine gun firing. The fool cop was just spraying the street without caring about who he hit. I was clipped in the leg by a ricochet but the cop killed the thief, and 2 innocent bystanders with him. Screwed up huh. That's what

all Central and South American towns and cities are like. I survived, but it made me a lot more cautious and aware of my surroundings after that, let me tell you!

All right.....I need a break.....let's go home and see what exciting nonsense is going on there.

This has nothing to do with the story but I'm sitting here with headphones on listening to Enya pretty loud (to me). It's very ethereal and floating and serene.

The music is just music. It's just a song like a million others. But, at this exact moment in time. It's very early morning about 4:30 and it just fits. I caught myself just being amazed at the perfection of it. A tear came to my eye, no shit. That's the importance of art and music. It has the ability to bring out what it means to be "human". The "it" that separates us from the animals.

Do you suppose that's why evil never likes art? Good question, never thought about it before. Sorry for the distraction.

Chapter 20

Getting Married Again.....another new adventure.



Home again, home again,
jiggety jig.

By now it had to be early 1981. Let's see. Caroline shot me in early 1980. She stabbed me in the leg on 4th of July. And if I remember right, drove the Camaro off the bridge with the T-Tops off at Labor Day and sank it in the Yadkin River. That was all in 1980.

Somewhere in between all of that excitement we had moved in together in our own place In Spring Lake. Nothing fancy but at least we were alone for the first time. It took about a month. Pregnant? Pregnant? Well, there was a new one.

I had always wanted to be a parent. I knew I would be a great parent. There wasn't any doubt in my mind. I was thrilled and excited about the prospect of it to be sure.

Once my mom had went crazy and left, it was me that took care of the rest of the kids, pretty much from that point on. Even after my Mom and Dad married, I'm not exaggerating. I don't have to. I cooked, I cleaned, I did laundry, I got the rest ready for school in the morning, and I raised them. I loved it. I was meant to do it.

The answer to why is very simple and easy. Jon was the oldest and a dictator want to be, Diane was next, and she had one interest, boys. Pregnant at 15 she found out real quick about "boys".

That left me to take care of Amber, Candy, Lisa, and Kelly. Also, whatever strays our parents brought in? I didn't mind it. Both my mom and Dad worked. They had to, with that many kids to feed. My dad wasn't in the military anymore.....anyway. I did the job....I liked the

job.....I wanted the
job.....Now I was
going to get it with my own
"it" at this point. TOOO
TOOOOOOOOOOO
TOOOOOOOOOOOOO
COOL!

Aw, but there was a catch.
Why couldn't anything be
easy in my life? Why couldn't
things happen without drama?
This is how I also know that
God has a sense of humor.
He offers me exactly what I
really, really want in the
whole world, but what does
he do? He says ok, but you
have to live/marry/survive a
crazy Indian, who by the
way, I'm going to make really
like alcohol, but not be able
to handle it, O.K.? No. Let's
not make things easy. Oh
yea, I'm going to give her an
evil disposition when she's
drinking, and a loving
disposition when she's not.

Careful when you sleep, I'll
give her an appreciation of
knives and guns as part of
her Indian heritage. Finally,
if, and that's a big "if" you
survive, you'll have a really
beautiful and intelligent
daughter. What do you
say? Ready to give it a shot?

Come to think of it, this
almost sounds like a wager
between God and the Devil
the more I think about it.
God offering a daughter that
will be the most important
thing.....forever, and the
devil offering lust, temper, the
illusion of love. Then claim

credit for God's
work.....yep, it must
be so.

Even 31 years later, I can
tell you my exact thoughts
and the decision that I made.
I never had a single regret
about the decision. Never a
second guess. That decision,
which is so hard for so many,
for me was a no brainer. No
matter what the cost, I
wanted my child to be born.
No matter what the cost to me
personally, that child was
going to have a chance.

Charleston Heston would
have said "Let it be written,
so let it be done". We begin,
a new adventure both of us.
We went to Dillon, South
Carolina, paid the money and
got married by a Justice of
the Peace. You can marry
your goat or first cousin in
South Carolina. It's very
liberal don't you think.

Now there were a few
missteps, but overall I had to
be pretty impressed with
Caroline's behavior during
the pregnancy. She refrained
from all but pot, during the
whole thing. This was short of
a miracle. She loved her pain
pills like Deluded, or
Morphine (all the girls did).

The next nine months kind of ran up and down for the most part. I was only living with a "cold-Turkey suffering, homicidal Indian, hormone jumping, pregnant woman with a history of violent outburst against you in particular.....no problem. Never had a second thought about it. I



knew I would never, ever be

bored.....that was good enough for me. Uh Ra.

Sorry baby girl, got to get back to work.

A friend and I were at Ft. Clayton in Panama drinking and decided we had never seen a penguin. He was a supply sergeant and had just packaged a pallet heading to Antarctica, to the research station permanently established on the pack ice. He said "Want to go?" You know Mikey!

So, we "hopped" from Central America 8 hours south by C-5A and arrived in Antarctica. We unloaded the aircraft, dropped the mail, and departed. I was there a total of about 20 minutes.

But, I can honestly say "Yea, I've been to Antarctica.....What about you?"

QUICK TRIP NOTE:

One of the great things about being in the military is that you can take a military aircraft anywhere a plane is already going for free or at a substantially reduced price. You can save a fortune traveling on leave.

You can also boldly go where no man has gone before more or less. Me, I took hops all over the United States. But, here was the best one.



Chapter 21

Meeting Crazy....and recognizing it! How Bizarre!

On one of my little excursions, I had a couple of incidents I'd like the opportunity to tell you about. Both will give you and even clearer picture of what it was like to live or work in Central America. I just loved it. It's still one of my favorite places in the world to visit or live.

Like I mentioned, one of our primary missions was to hinder and if possible defeat the Sandinistas' in Nicaragua. The country is bordered by El Salvador to the West, Guatemala to the Northwest, and Honduras to the Northeast. The entire southern border was connected with Costa Rica and just south of that, Panama and the Canal. In terms of distance, think of each one the size of a small state like Jersey or Delaware. Not far, for an army to take over the canal, if it chose to invade. As Jim Carey would say 'Not Good. Not G.....o.....o.....d!

This was definitely not acceptable to President Regan. It was a direct affront to our national esteem and pride. Here was a little piss ant country saying we couldn't do anything about

them being socialist and you know what? They were right. We tried everything short of outright war to beat the Sandinistas.

We used dirty tactics like funding right wing death squads, developing and disseminating propaganda. This was designed to attack a targets credibility or political standing, or whatever we needed to bring them down.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER AT ALL TIMES!!!!!!!!!!!!

The U.S. Government has no problem with negotiating and supporting right wing military or civilian dictators around the world. There is a very good reason for this"

1. Who is the most capable of controlling their populations, military arsenals, and economic engines in a country? This is pretty much the definition of "stable" I would think.
2. He who has the guns has the power as they say. The military in third and second world countries own that control... Revolutionaries or cartels represent

their opposition.
Both of these are
“unstable elements”.

3. The remaining
balance but by no
means majority, are
the left wing,
socialist or
communist, who
fantasize about
“kumbbiya” or “We
are the World”.
4. Door #4. True
visionaries in their
countries. Examples
I think, would be
Anwar Sadat of
Egypt, Omar
Torrijos of Panama,
Martin Luther King,
or JFK here. They
are few and far
between and don’t
normally trust our
government. That’s
because in the past,
we have chosen 1,
2, or 3, by
necessity or from
the reality of the
moment. What’s
the least, worst
option?
5. The Least/Worst
Option. Chosen
almost 100% of the
time because 1-4
are never clear or
certain.

It sucks for the State
Department. ***Multiply this
times 130 countries.***

Now, on that
layer or base, let’s
throw all the needs
of the U.S.
Government and all

the people’s and
corporations wants
and needs living in
this country. You
don’t think this
branch and the
military have their
hands full. Every
hour of every day,
because it’s always
daytime
somewhere. I’m
sure the British were
the first to feel it.
You remember the
old term “*the Sun
never sets on the
British Empire*” The
State Department
deals with that kind
of pressure every
single day 24/7. I
feel lucky for
having the
opportunity to help.
I also feel regret
and shame because
I know what are
government is
capable of, and
how it operates. I
didn’t know that
when I started. It
goes back to
“What have we
done in the last 40
years as a nation to
be proud of?
Osama? Is that the
best we got?
Pitiful, ya’ll pitiful.
See what I mean?

I have to temper
that thought with
the fact that it’s not
a perfect world.
Just the opposite is
true. It’s evil, good,

fair and unfair,
every contrast
imaginable. How
do we control the
uncontrollable?
What's the cost if
you don't try? Is
that even possible
in this day and
age? Probably not!
You can't just do
nothing. Never
give up and never
surrender!

There is one fact alone that
will keep me from ever
participating in helping the
government again. As long
as you do what they say and
how they say it, fine.

Disagree, or don't be the
"flavor of the month" and
you're as disposable as a
dirty dish rag. It doesn't
matter how dedicated you
were or good you performed
in the past. If you become a
liability or they perceive you
as uncontrollable, then you're
out of there. They will use
whatever means possible to
accomplish that goal. Fair is
not a word that I would use to
describe the United States
Government, I don't think it's
a word that has been used to
describe them in a very long
time.

Loyalty and
Honor.....when we lost them
we lost the moral advantage
and in my mind, we lost
America. Our generation is
to blame and I think it's
directly because we had our

hope taken from us in
November 1963. It was
replaced with hatred,
cynicism, and watch out for
yourself. Not the best traits
for the rest of the world to
emulate. Now, you know why
the rest of the world thinks
we're "assholes", and that
won't change no matter how
many dollars we send. They
just see it as an easy bleed
off of our national resources.
Dumb ass Americans.

CAMELOT IS DEAD. THE
KING IS DEAD.....LONG
LIVE THE NEW AMERICA.
Leave your compassion and
humanity at the door. Their
time is over.

One of these unsavory
characters we had to deal
with was the President of El
Salvador. His name was Rios
Montt. Not a very Hispanic
sounding last name, but he
was of peasant blood like
Noriega.

Our government couldn't
go in like in Vietnam. This
was only 7 years later. This
type of interference shall we
say, was still way too fresh in
everyone's minds. Political
and economic isolation was a
much better way at the time.
That meant that we had to
isolate Nicaragua (all the
north using/manipulating
Guatemala, Honduras, and El
Salvador. Ultimately it was
easy. Costa Rica was to the
entire southern border and

was like Switzerland. Besides, it had no standing Army because it didn't need one. There are more retired wealthy Europeans living in Costa Rica than there are Costa Ricans. The Costa Ricans that are there, are very well paid and have a lifestyle better than that in the US. This type of economy and political situation is not conducive to revolutionary thoughts or propaganda. It just doesn't work.

Socialism and Communism are ideals for the have not's, and not the haves. It's a fact. , All we had to worry about were, the three countries to the north, there would be no expansion to the south.

This information campaign was also to be used as a diversion to cover insertion and familiarization of "A-Teams" to organize resistance in the border towns of El Salvador and into northern Nicaragua. It's what Special Forces does best. Small 5-6 man teams, very effective against guerrilla and counter-guerrilla operations. Take away their support base and a guerrilla operation cannot survive long. In Central and South America especially we would force them to turn to trafficking drugs as a means of monetary support. Once this was done, they lost even more support, hammer more, take away more. It's a slow but effective process.

That's why we were in San Salvador, to meet with

President Montt and his advisors to discuss the "information campaign and get their approval".

It was your normal military briefing. We didn't have PowerPoint, or even personal computers back then. Presentations were slides with the old carousels, you all know the drill.

The briefing lasted about a 1/2 hour nothing exceptional. They were going to agree, we knew it before we ever walked in. It was a dog and pony show because Montt was not in control. The military was. He sat there like a puppet. That is what he was. They picked an uneducated peasant as a puppet. They may have even pulled him out of an insane asylum. This man was truly crazy. Anybody that has lived with someone crazy knows it's in the eyes. It's the one place they can't hide it. I know crazy. I have lived with crazy. I have the gene in me as do all of my sisters and brothers"

"I do not suffer from being crazy. I enjoy every minute of it."

Rios Montt talked to god right in front of us. I don't mean praying. I mean a full- fledged, no shit, back and forth conversation with god. It was what he did every day. He didn't think a thing about it.....Be afraid! Be very afraid! This man is running a

*country? That can't be
possible can it?*

I really didn't expect that
from the president of a
country. After all, my first
was President Kennedy. I
guess it takes all kinds of
Presidents to rule a world.

All right, we got their
approval. Time to move on to
Honduras.

Chapter 22

“A Life of Poverty leaves you no Option.”

Every one of us in the United States should be grateful every single day for what we have. We don't care because for us it's the norm. We used to be compassionate. Sending money is not compassion. It requires actual caring. Yes, we do still send aid and money everywhere. I'm sorry to tell you that the majority of it, is money being thrown away. You cannot buy loyalty, trust, and in the end stability. Why do we try?

I don't feel it's because we worry or because we are still compassionate. It's for what it will get us. Not a bad reason but not a noble one either.

Honor, justice, humanity are esoteric ideas that the peasant doesn't even think about. We have a better chance of winning the lottery than he does of getting any of those concepts, ideas that we take for granted. They

don't apply to his day to day life. Survival, in its dirtiest form is not honorable or humane.

Do we worry about it as a nation? Yes, for moments at a time. Sound bites really. They don't express our day to day reality. It's their day to day reality.

I want to give you a semi-hypothetical situation:



“You're a farmer in Kansas. You grow crops and cattle but it's just a little farm.

You're making it, but barely. Times are tough. A thunderstorm comes through and destroys a portion of the fence between your property and your neighbors. No one's fault. This was an act of nature.

Now one of your cows gets out during the storm and goes thru the fence onto your neighbor's property. Neither you, nor your neighbor can afford brands and besides, you only have 5-10 head. You have way to little an amount to register a brand. You round up the cattle after the storm and one is missing. What do you do?

They did exactly what they had to do to survive. There was never a question in their minds.....they had to go and get the cow.

I am going to do all of you a favor. I am not going to describe what we saw as a result of this "accident"... We

Apocalypse". It's in the movies and on TV. The story lines are a little different but the reality is a scary one.

How many of you out there will be able to survive if food, water, and electricity



witnessed about 10 members of two families fight over that cow. I mean with clubs, machetes, or whatever. 4 men were killed, and I couldn't even count the number of injuries. The bottom line is that cow represented their ability to live and eat. They had no choice but to defend it.

Can you imagine something like that happening here? It could. Take away hope and the ability to make it day to day and see what chaos that creates. When it's a matter of feeding you and your family the social fabric will be the dinner napkin. Used and thrown away afterwards.

Everybody laughs and jokes about the "Zombie

sources are cut off? How long? Will you be able to defend what you have against others wanting it? How? Willing to take a life? Willing to kill and gut an animal? Willing to drink putrid water? No?

Then you and your family will die. No right, no wrong, that's their reality. They deal with what we laugh at as the *zombie apocalypse* every day. Who's going to be better prepared if something really does happen? Who's going to survive? Us, spoiled rich kids. Money isn't worth the paper it's printed on in a war or economic collapse.

Who you going to be pissed at? What are you going to do.....Lay down and die? Never give up and never surrender! If you don't know how to survive

then you have already given
up and surrendered. You just
haven't realized it yet.

Chapter 23

Things Start Getting Nasty at Home.

This chapter is going to be about my daughter being born, Caroline and I separating, , I'll shout to the top of my lungs.....I'm very, very, very, very, very,very,very,very,very....and somewhat proud of my daughter, Stephanie. She's not rich. She was a little spoiled from the last 14 years, from not worrying about money. She's just starting to realize that things don't really matter and can be given up easily. None of those things are in the least important. She cries and worries like any woman and that's fine. It's what a woman does.

What I'm proud of is her mind, her uncommon sense, humor, her sense of right and wrong, and her ability to think.

How many of you like those things about your kids? How many of you tried to foster those traits in your kids consciously? Not many? What are the things wrong with America? See any correlation? Parents don't parent. If you don't parent, how do you expect to get a good kid who "thinks right"? Not many? Hmm....interesting. Doesn't it make sense that if you put a lot into something you will get a better reward than if you neglect something? Hmmmmm, there might be a correlation between people working and not parenting and kids becoming worse humans as a result. Will worse humans, give us worse results in the future? Hush now, that's that wrong thinking again, besides "It" doesn't matter, we won't be here anyway.

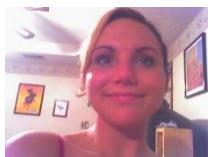
By now, Caroline and I had a daughter.....Stephanie Michelle Glassford (my pride and joy even 31 years later). She was born by caesarian because of Caroline's blood sugar, and the potential for complications because of LUPUS in her family.

This is hard on the mother but wonderful on the baby. Steph was born on September 25th 1981. This was/is the best day in my life. I was there. Just lucky again I guess. She was round and pink and with none of the

distortion or bruising a normal kid has with natural child birth.

(I'm editing this it's September 22, 2013. Happy Birthday Stephanie 3 days early. You'll be 32. Can you believe it?).

You cannot be gone 9 months out of the year, and expect there not to be problems in a relationship or marriage. I wonder what the percentage



is of divorces among really driven people.

Things were starting to get bad between Caroline and me. She was becoming more and more like the old Caroline or, as she like to call herself when she was like this; "Roxanne". Roxanne was not someone I liked to see. When Roxanne came out someone was going to jail.

On one occasion I came home and Caroline was drunk. I took the keys and hid them. She had already wrecked 3 or 4 cars by then. Thought I was being smart. Never underestimate a pissed off Indian. While I was sleeping, she removed the lug nuts of every tire of the Camaro AND THREW THEM IN THE WOODS.

I got up in the morning and had my coffee, and about 15 minutes later

started to work in the morning. I guess I made it about a hundred yards down the highway before all 4 tires, fell off at the same time. I was up to about 40 mph. She thought it was hilarious. I got an Article 15 for being 1/2 day late for work.

There was another time where we were driving in town and arguing about something. She was drunk and she told me stop the car right then. I refused. Crazy girl jumped out the car at 45 mph. She must have rolled 20 yards at least. Just like always she wasn't hurt. She just sprained her knee. Anyone else would have been killed.

I was right at the beginning, before this relationship ever started, before I married her. Life was not ever going to be boring. She could be mean but damn she was fun. She was strong willed, and that was one of my main requirements in a woman. The yes dear, no dear, type would drive me bat shit. That was one of the reasons I did not marry Kathy Cochram all those years ago.

Got to get back to work.

Chapter 24

Noriega Ascends to the Presidency and I attend the Ms. Universe Contest.



I only had about 6 months left in the Army and I pretty much knew I wasn't going to re-enlist for a third hitch. I knew that it wasn't going to stay married to Caroline. I also knew that I couldn't do the job I was doing, and be a single parent. It just wasn't it the cards.

I was still investigating Manuel even though he became the President. I was becoming disillusioned though, because our government was getting all sorts of excellent intelligence from me and my partner, but it didn't seem to matter. They didn't seem to want to act on it at all. This was becoming obscene.

We followed the dirty money to France and Switzerland and a couple of other places in the Bahamas. It wasn't hard. We knew everything about him. But as always, as long as we thought we could control him it was alright. Except it wasn't, and we couldn't. History proved me right on that one. I called it from the git/go. There were other advantages to going back down though, as your about to find out.



Late 1983, we were sent back to Panama and lived in the Marriott Hotel for 6 full months. It was awesome. I guess as our intelligence output increased, the higher ups were happy and we were rewarded appropriately.

Got a trip, all expenses paid?
Us too!

Did your trip allow you to stay in a 5-Star hotel with 138 of the most beautiful women in the world there? Did they run around all over the hotel 24/7 for a week? Were the majority away from home for the first time, and on their first adventure? No, sorry guy, you were robbed.



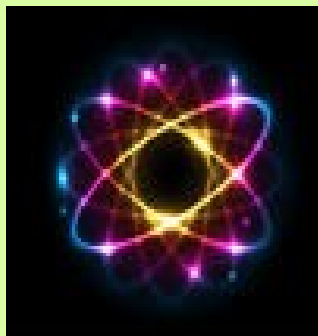
We were lucky enough to go back down, right at the time they were filming the Ms. Universe Pageant. It just happened to be in Panama City that year. Talk about luck. Don't be jealous guys. It doesn't matter where you get your appetite as long as you go home to eat.

My god, it was an

"all you can eat smorgasbord". Life was good. See, I told you there was a god.

Rewarded? What would you consider a reward for the type of work that we had been doing? What would be appropriate and something that your boss could give.

I'll bet you a dollar that our gift was better. Got a bonus? Too bad, our gift was better. Got a Porsche? Sorry, our gift was better.



I've seen and felt the truth to the old saying "A woman will make a man stupid!" I've experienced this on a number of occasions. But never, have I felt that stupid. Before or since, it doesn't matter. It's like being 4 and in a candy store for the first time. Too much choice, you'd feel like a displaced dissident from Siberia, coming to New York for the first time, ad going into a really large department store to shop, it's overwhelming.

Seriously, it wasn't planned but it sure happened. Talk about a bonus at work. You can bet money we never told our bosses. Sometimes, discretion is the better part of valor. Hell, we were downright honorable knights.

We were both traveling and working/no uniforms. Not spying, but we didn't need to state the obvious at the same time. I was wearing Armani. If you have never been to Name Brand Clothing, you should. You can get really excellent deals on top notch clothes. Good thread counts, and the quality is worth it. (My 5th wife's efforts to teach me to be "refined", must have taken ahold somewhere).

I would like to shout personal thanks though, to a few of the Latin American delegates. They saved my life and didn't even know they were doing it. They stopped a potential problem dead in its tracks that could have affected me my entire life.

I was a potentially gambling fool. I didn't know it. I had never really tried gambling. It never really interested me. It's much more interesting when Ms. Brazil or Ms. Ukraine is sitting beside you. You become highly motivated and highly foolish at the same time.

Over the week I managed to lose all my travel money, the Army's TDY money, and a friend's money. I was in a foreign country, supposed to be working on top secret

stuff, and I couldn't afford to leave. Hell, I couldn't afford to pay to the Marriot bill. I was in a world of shit again.

Do I confess, and call my commanding officer? Remember, they had no idea of my personal life. They thought I was quiet and refined with a daughter and loving wife. What the hell was I doing running with women and losing all of my money in a casino? I could have dealt with that but as an interrogator, I knew that once you opened that can of worms, there was no telling where it might end. I couldn't foresee any scenario where it turned out well for me.

I was bad. I was very bad. I was very, very bad. It took me 2 days to find the right one. I walked the lobbies, and hallways looking. I finally found who I was looking for. She was sitting in a little garden built off the indoor pool, she was reading a book, and I couldn't get a good look at her face at first.

You could tell by the cut of the dress and her shoes that she had money. Duh, anybody that stays at a Marriott overseas, has money. That's a given. It was more than that. She had the whole package. She was about 50 maybe 55 and alone, well dressed but not ostentatious.

I began a conversation and we ended up visiting for about an hour. The next day it was the same thing. Each time I excused myself with having to work so, that I developed a sense of anticipation in her. It was the interrogator in me. Use everything to adapt and overcome.

I became a gigolo for a week. I guess she gave me about 600.00 overall, but I still needed twice that. Stupid went to the casino. 2:1 black or red, Roulette. The odds were not 50/50 but there the best odds in the house.

I put everything on black (because if I lost I knew I was dead) and said a little prayer. The dealer rolled the wheel and spun the little ball.....here it goes.....all or nothing.....screwed or saved?.....I won.....I've been in casino's maybe 5 or 6 times since then. I got lucky, and I got cured. Uh Ra. And...I got home. That ended up being my last trip.....but not by the Army's choice.

Got to get home.....bye bye.

Chapter 25

Give up your Dream Job or Give up your Daughter?



Not
even
a
difficult
choice. The

Army was the easiest part of this. I told everyone at the beginning that there was nothing, nor will there ever be, anyone or anything more important to me than my daughter Stephanie. I will die to protect her and she's lucky too. If there is a Zombie Apocalypse I can take care of her complexly. Gun, Bow, knife, hunting, fishing, camping, surviving, I did take all the skills.

I would need every skill and every bit of training to accomplish my next and most important mission. Getting Stephanie away from Caroline. You ever try to

take an Indian's baby away from her? It didn't matter, what was right for Stephanie, it just wasn't going to happen.

Never Give Up, Never Surrender. I planned it so that she didn't stand a chance. She always thought she had the upper hand. I let her think that. Everything was planned and laid out and the Army came in at the last minute and threw it all out the window. Let me explain.

I haven't discussed my capabilities as far as statutes, laws, and regulations go. Very shortly, I can read regulations at 1200 words a minute and absorb all of it. I even understand it heaven forbid. I used this ability as you will see.

The way I saw it either North Carolina or Missouri would have jurisdiction in a divorce and custody hearing. I preferred it be in Missouri, because Caroline and her friends had "influence" with local authorities to put it mildly. I couldn't get a fair trial there. So, I had to make Missouri the State with jurisdiction. How did I do that? Better, how do I do it without Caroline knowing? She couldn't know and I'll tell you why.....

You had the basic North Carolina whore house described to you right? Did you wonder about the girls? Think about it. Would the

same girls be at the same places for ever and ever? Wouldn't things get a little boring for the paying customer? What do you do? You can't exactly post an opening in the local "Thrifty Nickel".

The solution to the problem is a circuit. Think of it kind of like the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. There is a circuit that runs from Florida up the east coast to New York.

Girls move up and down the circuit and stop at places that are set up along the way where they can work and earn a living. It works for a variety of reasons. It allows the girls to be fresh and new. It also allows them a way to run from pimps and the law.

Nobody knows all the stops I doubt. My problem was that if Caroline took off with Stephanie and went into the system it would be next to impossible to find them.

My problem was worse because Caroline knew the exact date that I was to be discharged. You could bet she would be wary around that time. Taking all of these variables into consideration I laid my plan.

First, I flew to Missouri over a weekend and got a lawyer. I went over my plan with him to be sure that it was

doable. He said it was so I began.

I posted an ad in the Web City Miners gazette (circulation 1,000) stating my intent to divorce Caroline. My Missouri state law, if I posted this information in a local paper for 6 months and it WAS UNCONTESTED, then an "uncontested divorce petition" could be submitted to the courts for approval and determination. This law was created so that people who had spouses disappear, and never return, could still get a divorce reasonably easily. It was never meant to be used to do what I planned.

This was October of 1983, six months before I was to get out in March of 1984. Everything was set in motion. Now just wait.

The next part of the plan couldn't happen until February of 1984. Caroline knew that I was to get out in March but she didn't know that I had 67 days of paid leave that I had accumulated and not taken over the years. I cashed in 30 days so that my new departure date was actually the beginning of February and not March. Tricky, but you know what they say about the best laid plans of mice and men. Oh yea.....you will never guess.....

The Army cancelled my early out leave and decided I had to go back to Central America. A bunch of right wing extremist had just killed 3 nuns and a priest in El Salvador. Worse, they were part of a group that we supported openly. Oh shit.....not now.....please god.....not now.



If I went, I lost Stephanie forever. If I don't do what the Army says, I'm court-martialed or worse sent to Leavenworth as a deserter God damn, isn't anything easy in this world? How do I solve this one? I started to get depressed until I remembered: I don't have any problems, I only have solutions. So, I just had to find the solution. You know one always exist!

It took a couple of hours thinking, but I came up with it

SAY IT WITH ME
NOW.....AWOL or as it is commonly known; absent without Leave. The military

can charge you with this if



you fail to show up for a formation or if you fail to miss a movement (say leave for war and you miss the boat). It covers from 1 second late to 29 days, 23 hours, and 59 minutes, to be exact. After exactly 30 days you become a deserter. That is a thousand percent worse and no joke.

The day that I was supposed to take off for El Salvador, I went to Caroline's (we were separated by now) and picked up Stephanie for the weekend just like I always did when I was in. This time I didn't come back.

I walked off the face of the



earth and the Army Freaked Out.

I didn't think about that one. Ops.....my bad.

Here was an interrogator, with above Top Secret Clearance, Working on the most sensitive Central and South American issues, E-6/almost E-7, intelligent, reliable, trustworthy,.....he and his daughter disappeared.....kidnappe d.....dead.....oh shit!

The sent the FBI first, then the NSA, then the CIA looking for me. They came so close so many times, but it's not hard to disappear if you know how. ID, all of it is easily obtainable. Ask any prostitute. Duh.....

They searched Panama, they searched Missouri, they even searched all my friends in North Carolina (including the whore houses that they knew about all the time).....But they couldn't find us.

At exactly one minute before I became a deserter, I turned myself in to CID headquarters at Ft. Bragg. They were not pleased and threw me right into a holding cell.

The next morning I had a visit from the base commanding general and the base Provost Marshal. They wanted to know from the horses' mouth, and not from a report, what the hell had

gone on. Who the hell did this little asshole think he was? (Boy if I had a dime for every time someone said or thought that about me, I'd be rich!).

Talk about being put on the carpet. I was laid prone expecting execution. Or at least, I expected the equivalent. I swear I "knew" I would receive the worst and should have gotten the book. As it was, these two gentlemen were the nicest guys I'd ever met in the Army. They were compassionate and understanding. But, they were Commanders and discipline had to be enforced. I was told this, and I understood the necessity, no matter how good the motivation or noble the cause.

They fined me \$500.00 and then reduced me in rank one stripe to E-5. It could have been a lot worse let me tell you. They could have done much worse but I think they understood.

More importantly, I was not in El Salvador and, they were going to reinstate my early ETS since they couldn't keep me anyway. That was the intent of the exercise in the first place. I didn't tell them that, I'm not stupid!



Oh buddy.....let's make an



enemy and start as a single
parent.....Here we go,
another adventure.....even
bigger....even more
important. No strain y da.

Now I wasn't totally honorable in my departure from Ft. Bragg. Caroline had one a lot to me and threatened me. She had me harassed at the end. It wasn't an "amicable" ending. We owned a trailer and property off the highway and I was going to just leave it for her to live in. It guaranteed her a place to live rent free for the rest of her life. It was the least I could do.

When I told her of this, she got pissed off. She told me a few seconds later that she really appreciated the gift and that it was nice. She would make a lot of money from it turning tricks and turning the whole place into her own whore house. "Thanks Mike!"

Oh now, that didn't strike me as quite right. As a matter of fact, I'd say that it pissed me off pretty well. I was a good boy. I didn't threaten her back or get mean and ugly. I told her that when I was gone she could do whatever she wanted with it. I meant every word of it.

The next morning I was at the trailer. Neither of us were living there since we separated. She was staying in Spring Lake with friends, and I was living in the barracks. March in North Carolina is awesome as far

as the nature and birds are concerned. That morning was a typical, beautiful morning. I was there just before sunrise.

I went to one end of the trailer and backed up about 20 yards, and sat the bag down, that I had with me. I knelt down on one knee and took the green plastic container with two metal sticks coming out, from the bag. I also removed the role of "commo" wire along with its carrier.

I looked at the green plastic and read "This Side toward Enemy". Good, I turned the plastic and faced that side toward the trailer. I stuck it in the ground. The leads that came out were like what you get on those little yard sale signs or for sale signs. You know what I mean. It stuck in the sandy soil just as easy as you please.

I took out the roll of wire and stripped the plastic insulation off the ends. I



connected the leads to the plastic box just like the directions indicated. Simple to follow instructions designed for any fool to use. OK. That was done.

I had to get a move on it. I only had a couple of minutes before the sun would rise. I backed up another 20 feet and hooked the wires to the

battery. It was just a little 9 volt. More than enough for what I needed. There it was, I was ready. She would remember this and so would I.

Now, the sun started to break over the horizon and just as the first rays of light cleared and hit the trailer, I hit the battery with the wire. Ka-Boom.....It really isn't a big explosion but an anti-personnel mine, otherwise known as a claymore, sends 500 little ball bearings out at 1,250 feet per second. They went through the trailer like butter. This was a KODAK moment. The sun shined off of all the exposed aluminum and through the holes. The sun reflected in a hundred directions just like off a hundred small mirrors. It was excellent. It went through appliances, furniture, everything. I helped her out by making it air conditioned right?

I think I figured it would take her a couple of cases of caulk and a hell of a lot of man hours to plug all of those holes, but it was possible. She would just have to put a little effort in it. I imagine she would have to do it alone though. Can't see other whores plugging a hole can you?

Well, got to go.....got a train to catch.

PART II

Life: After the Army – Cutting the Umbilical Cord

*Life..... Without
the Army; A First for Me at
29 years old.*

There is no future living in
the past....Get on with
living for the future instead!

Chapter 26

No Army any More?



The Army had been my
security blanket since the time
I was born. I burned that

bridge when I went AWOL. I
can't remember if it was
because I intended to, or that I
didn't have a choice. Bottom
line was I confessed to
everything when I returned.
That puppy was put to bed
and there wasn't any going
back.

I guess what scared me
more than anything was that
everything that I loved to do,
interrogate, travel, pimping,
research analyst, everything
that I was, didn't exist as of
0900 on that morning in
March of 1984. Along with
losing all of that, I didn't have
a home or income and a 2 year
old to figure out what to do
with.

I was afraid. This is
life.....I grabbed my

daughter by the hand.....Closed my eyes.....went to the edge.....and jumped, right off into the future.

prohibitive and inconvenient. I had two railroad grandfathers and that is bad to say. We never put the money into AMTRACK to make it work. Just making a few new passenger cars didn't cut it.



Question: When did we build AMTRAK and Why? You can't remember can you? That's OK. It was begun in the mid-1970. Most American's forgot about it by 1978. By 1982 it was going bankrupt.

When OPEC started closing the petroleum valve in '74, our response was logical. Mass transportation had worked in Europe and should be able to work here. When the brilliant planners considered it they didn't do their homework. Americans loved their cars and weren't willing to give them up as easily as the Government planners thought we would. We just didn't use AMTRACK. We still have it but it isn't a primary source of transportation. It's still cost

Stephanie and I took AMTRACK when I left Ft. Bragg, and we were going to take it all the way to Kansas City. It was a nightmare trip. We arrived 2 days late, and went through 4 engines on the trip. It seemed like we were broke down every couple of hundred miles. No fun with a two year old, under great conditions but that made it



really unbearable.

Within 5 days I had a divorce and custody of Steph because of the plans I had laid 9 months earlier. It all went

perfect. It was over before Caroline even knew it was happening. I know it was devious. I couldn't leave Stephanie to that life. I didn't want to part a daughter from her mother either. But, she had shot me, stabbed me, and a lot of other abuse. Stephanie wasn't going to live that life. To this day, I don't regret that decision. Caroline died at 50 from Alcohol Poisoning and her liver failing. Indian's not handling their liquor is true, as far as I'm concerned. Stephanie knows the whole story and is glad I did what I did. What would you have done?

Way back in 1975, I enlisted on the last day of the old GI Bill for one purpose and one purpose only. That was to get the education benefits that were going to disappear. I fulfilled my part of the bargain and now it was Uncle Sam's turn. I was going to go back to school and get a degree. I thought that Political Science would be a natural choice. It was either work or go to school. I had been working 9 years at this point, and it was time for a break. School it was, and working at the same time. Single parents have to work. Besides I had experience with sleep deprivation and working two jobs anyway. It wasn't anything new for me. I didn't want to leave Steph with a

baby-sitter for 12 hours a day so that was the first problem that needed a solution.

Grandma Lucy came to the rescue. She gave me the greatest gift a grandparent can give. She gave my daughter all the things that I couldn't. She gave her a sense of right and wrong, morality, ethics, and finally but most importantly, her role as a human being. This is in the Cherokee sense of the word, not the English. A "human being" in the Cherokee culture, is civilized, respects others and nature, and lives in harmony. Those were pretty decent goals and presents to give, if you ask me. I can't thank her enough! Bless you Grandma.

The last time I counted, she had 46 grandkids and over 100 great grandkids. You can't quote me on that. We're like gerbils as far as our breeding capabilities are concerned. Grandma didn't stand a chance. She was hooked and loved Steph from the very first moment she met her.

Grandma Lucy was only 5 feet tall herself, but a handful. After all, she's who we got most of our abilities from. Well, when we first arrived to Grandma's house in Springfield, Mo, we got out of the car and walked down the driveway to the house. Grandma saw us pull up and

came out to meet us. Here I was her “mouse”, (grandma was the one that brought me home in the shoebox 28 years earlier) with a little black haired green eyed, Indian, 2 years old and cute as a button.

She ran up to us and gave me a hug first. I returned it grinning. Always have, and always will love Grandma Lucy. She looked down and Stephanie and said “Praise the Lord, what a beautiful child”. When she said it, she raised her arms in the air, in a gesture of affirmation. What does Steph do? The exact same thing. She raised her arms in the air and looked up at the sky and said “Praise the Lord”.

It was funny as hell to see. The look of shock on Grandma’s face was worth every moment. We laughed about that a lot over the next few years before she passed on. I believe Stephanie was her favorite of all the great-grandchildren. That could just be me being egotistical and a proud parent but I don’t know. What do you think? Honestly, I didn’t remember that story but, my daughter reminded me of it yesterday. See, that’s why you don’t work in a vacuum.

Now I’m sure that I mentioned that Grandma taught me to do everything I know how to do now, when I was a kid. I was hoping that

Stephanie would get the same opportunity for love and encouragement. She did and it was wonderful.

Grandma solved the issue with Stephanie and her being looked after while I worked and went to school. Those were both separate issues that had to be addressed. I’d like to start with working and then finish up with school.

**WORKING AS A
CIVILIAN – “How, do
people do this every day of
their lives?”**



It seemed like I had a lot of



different jobs while I was going to school during those years. But that wouldn’t be accurate I guess. I initially worked as a security guard for

a company named Guard Security Police. It was kind of the perfect job because I could go to work during the day and then go to school at night. The people I worked for were ex-military and we got along great. It sounds like a pretty mundane job, right? Not True! It gave me insights into the jobs people do on a day to day basis in factories, plants, warehouses, all sorts of places.

In Springfield, they have a large paper cup manufacturing plant called Lily Tulip. The place has been there since I was a little kid in the `1960's. I always wondered what that place looked like on the inside and I got a chance to find out while working for Guard.

It was dismal. It was dark. It wasdepressing. They made good money working there, and it did give them the opportunity to buy their boats and cars, and houses, plus whatever else. But golly guys, those are just things. It takes a different kind of person than me, to do that kind of work. I just couldn't do it. It would be just like being in jail, but you got to go home at night. I couldn't imagine having a job where I knew what tomorrow was going to be like, the day

after tomorrow, and the next 30 years.

Then there was Litton, the electronics plant. They were out by the airport and a much more modern facility. They made circuit boards for microwaves and televisions, stuff like that. It was much better lit. The drawback to there was, all the chemical baths and other exposures to chemicals that they "say" are safe now, but who knows 20 years from now. There is no way in hell that breathing those fumes over an extended period could be good for you. I call that wrong thinking again.



In those 4 years of going to places like those, there is a hands down winner for the worst place. It got its award in a variety of categories. The smell category was its true trademark though. I'm talking about Nacho Cheese flavoring made by Mid-American Dairies of America. You guys might like the taste, but be out in the middle of a huge warehouse, with thousands of pounds of



that stuff, sitting in a hot warehouse.....
Needless to say, I don't eat Nacho cheese anything. Just the thought now, makes me want to puke.

There were a few brief stints in a convenience store, a gas station, and as a concrete finisher. I didn't do badly, but it wasn't a perfect fit. Somehow, I just couldn't see me sitting around and doing those type of "things". It just never would be in the cards. Many people can be happy with that. That's life? They do this voluntarily? Boy, you just don't know how important school became at that point. It was even more important than I thought before I got out, if you know what I mean. You have to understand that "Interrogator" is not exactly a skill set that is in high demand outside of military and law enforcement circles. I didn't want to be involved in those organizations. My options to continue in that field... dead end, dead life, just dead. I couldn't give up the chance to continue living a "unique life". A life that was *only* for me, and *decided by me*, was the only acceptable one. I had to go to school.

There was another experience that involved working, but not for pay. Granny had a gravel driveway

from the street to her carport. There was another driveway that ran behind the house. This was the one she always used. But, whatever granny wanted, granny got from me. This event made me understand for sure that I wasn't meant for manual labor or slave labor, or any other type of labor that involved intensive physical duty. Now, I was in good shape, but I would never be that good. I'm too small. Granny wanted a paved driveway.

It would be 80 foot long and 8 foot wide. She wanted it to be at least 3" deep in the center but have 12" footings on the edges to keep water from running under the slab. In Missouri, it gets cold enough in the winter for water to freeze under the concrete, then expand and break it up or crack it. You'd be surprised of the power of ice.

I had never done concrete but of course like any kid, I'd seen it done. I'm sure I did a couple of little jobs, like patching, when I was a kid, but never to this extent. How many wheel barrows of dirt do you think it would take to remove it, getting ready to pour the pad? It was only about 300. I had to carry the removed dirt around the house, down the back, to dump way in the back yard.

Probably 50-60 yards away and downhill to get to it, better that, than the other way around.

I did the whole thing by hand, and she got just what she wanted. 10 pads evenly spaced for expansion. I had to pour pads because I was doing it by hand. It took 763, eighty pound bags of cement and concrete to do the whole job. It was way too much for one person to do. I learned though; don't promise something you can't deliver. Especially, not to your granny you fool. I had to finish what I started, I did, and she loved it. I'm sure it will take a 9.0 earthquake to dislodge that sucker. The concrete had iron shards in it because it was off-spec concrete for the government. She got it at a dollar a bag because it was surplus that the concrete company couldn't use. It was smart for granny, but bad for me. Oh well, I loved her anyway. She got what she wanted and that was all that mattered.

The only other work that was kind of interesting was I worked for free for 3 months for our neighbor, to learn about electricity. I had been

shocked a lot of times and burned up a lot of wires in the past. It was about time I learned what it all was really about.

We did residential and commercial electrical work, and I worked as the electrician's helper. Just like with any job, I was the low man on the totem pole, so I got the shit work at first, but moved up as David gained trust in my abilities. He was pretty impressed with how quickly I picked it up. It isn't hard. Get shocked 2 or 3 times really well, and I guarantee you will start to pay attention to what you're doing. In reality there is just one other minor rule you have to keep in mind. Don't ever cut two wires at the same time... Everything that is blown up from an electrician point of view is because a negative and a positive were cut, or touched at the same time. No. no, no. You'll never do that, if you always just cut one at a time.



Just like in vampire movies there are things that are true and not true. Like for instance, a vampire will die if a wooden stake is driven

through the heart, right? Well, it's also true that an electrician will die, if he's standing in water and screws up. Remember just like oil and water, electricity and water do not mix. How do they ever get that light to stay on at the bottom of the pool? I know, but you have to call for a service call to find out the answer.....ha.....ha.....ha.

Doing this work really helped me along later on in life. But, later for that, if you don't mind... That pretty well covered by initial introduction to the civilian working world. Do you think that I was impressed? Not likely so far, if you know what I mean.

Last but not least, was my introduction into "owner financed" homes? You know the old saying "a fool and his money are soon parted." **As god is my witness, I am such a fool!** Oh yea, I got burned like a million other Americans. Owner financing was a ticket to the American Dream. Part of my ETS money was spent on a down payment to owning a house. Only two thousand dollars down, and easy monthly payments. Oh yea, I would own my little part of the American dream. It wasn't big

or fancy. It was just a little 2 bedroom built in the 40's or 50's. I wouldn't have even qualified it as a "suburbia" home. Always read the contract. I was fulfilling a dream it just wasn't mine.

The scam is, you pay a couple of thousand dollars down payment. Usually this takes just about all the money that a poor family can scrape together. Then everything is hunky dorey. That is everything is fine until the family gets the first month behind. Once done, according to the fine print, the contract becomes null and void, and the "new Owner" is in default and the "old owner" gets the property back to flip and sell again, plus pockets the two thousand dollars. It's legal sure. Is it right? Hell No! I'll be the first to yell it. Part of the problem with America is that the "fuck you" attitude is dominate, this is just an indicator. Do you think god would be more willing to help a nation that's compassionate and morally just, or a nation of people who only want to make money, no matter what the cost? Can any of you look at us as a nation and honestly say to yourself that we are "morally just". If you said yes, I'd bet money your lying. "De Nile".....it's not just a river in Egypt is it. This is just another symptom; let's

continue on with the story
though, shall we?

Chapter 27

Dr. David Heinlein - Southwest Missouri State University



Economics versus Politics in the real world.

Up to this point I've only talked about 2 other people that influenced my life and my way of thinking. The first was my step-mom Sharron, and the other was Glen Alf in High School. I did give honorable mention to my

English Teacher for her addition of a social conscience.

Dr.
David
Heinlein
gave me
“critical



thinking”. In other words, the ability to use my skills “in conjunction” with everything that went on around me in day to day life. Not a bad skill set to have right? Oh, it gets even better. How about the ability to do that, and then add on top of it, an understanding of the “how” to use the information, to manipulate a single person or large group. Sounds just like PSYOP DOESN'T. Where I had the raw ability, he gave me refinement. Isn't that all that college is really? It doesn't teach you anything you didn't already know, but it does give you models to talk to other people intelligently about what ever subject. Still, that's pretty good. Especially since it is a skill you will use the rest of your life “hopefully”. The above doesn't apply if you go to jail, or work for the government. Both are designed to sap your, and individuality and ability to think. Sorry, rules of employment, we cannot deviate, and besides I didn't make the rule!

I can't remember how many hours I was credited, from military schools and training. These were actual "in class" hours of subjects, while I was in the military, that had course materials that could be adapted to the civilian criteria. It seems like it was 25-30 hours after they completed the conversion. It was enough to make me a sophomore when I started, but I still had to take the level 100 intro classes (which everyone hates). These are the classes taught by the most uninspired professors or those doing penance. Why would I say something like that? It's because of a conversation that I had with Dr. Heinlein one afternoon.

We were discussing the drop- out rate among new students in the first year. He questioned, why I thought it happened. I thought about it a second and answered "Money, Too Hard, or they were not ready?" He laughed and said; "That's pretty much the total ability of the average American or the average human being for that matter, to understand and analyze a given situation." "They just can't go any deeper. It's like it hurts their brains to think.. I've never understood it."

This was coming from a college professor? I assumed I didn't understand what he

was looking for. If so, how could I provide the right answer? Even this thinking is wrong I found out. Why the hell should I worry about "providing the right answer"? Wouldn't it be better to prove that, whatever answer you provided "Was" the right answer? The ability to logically argue that point, and see the argument proceeding to the end. If you did that, you would know the end before your opponents. If that is the case, then you could fashion a way to accomplish that goal logically, without emotion or distraction. If you did these things, you increased your probability of attaining your goal. The better the odds, the better the chance of winning, right?

GUESS
WHAT?.....
.....that's
Politics/Political Science.

Oh yea, I was hooked, economics describes the how something is made from start to finish, and the systems needed to accomplish that. Important stuff to be sure, but this would involve numbers and math, so the chances of me getting interested in that are about nil. It also dealt with "things" in the world. I have no interest in things. Never

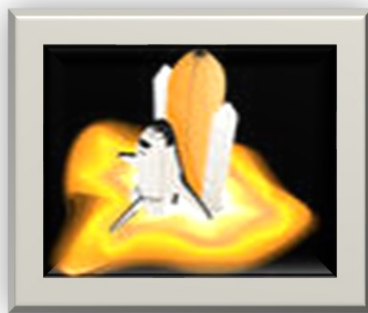
have, never will. Must be that gypsy, crazy gene again. “Things” like economics. It helps them understand their “things” better.

Now think about it, the stuff I just talked about is important. But, think about it a little deeper. Why, did they make what they made? Who wants it? Why do they want it? What are they willing to give up getting it? What are they susceptible to, that could “make them” want it? How do you stroke their egos? Can you offer something in exchange for something you want? How do you get more and give less?

All these questions and a thousand more, could be created over a single thought. The “Why” naturally leads you to “How”? Combine both and you have politics. The people who practice it are never poor (I’m, not talking about monetary wealth). I liked all those ideas. Dr. Heinlein was enlightened and I want to dedicate this chapter to him. He taught me and probably thousands of others, over the span of his lifetime, the art of “Critical Thinking”. If you have that skill, nothing is impossible or beyond a person’s reach. How great of a gift is that? How few teachers can actually inspire it? How many were inspired to become teachers but failed at

“inspiring”. What better legacy can you give the world?

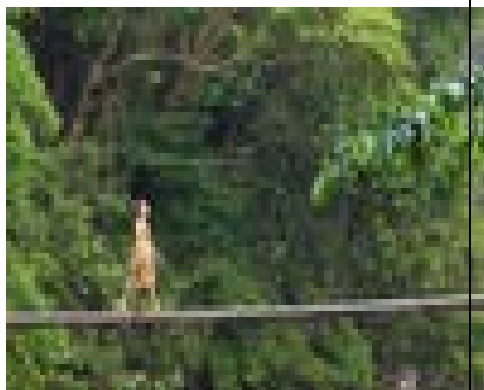
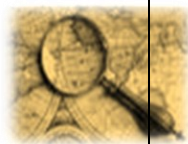
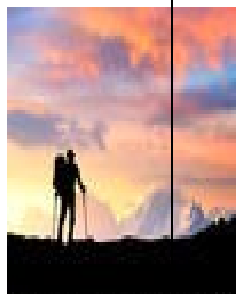
I was sitting in one of his classes on the afternoon that the Space shuttle Challenger exploded. A strange coincidence but we had been talking about the teacher that went up on that mission. Christie McCullough? I can’t quite remember her name. I do remember that I was very impressed and a little envious. It’s someplace I hadn’t been if you know what I mean.



When it exploded I remember exactly what I thought. This is a little strange. It probably didn't cross many peoples' minds. I thought "What a great way to go. Think about it. Your living the greatest moment of your life, the greatest thrill and expectation.....
....boom.....in an instant it's over. No regrets, no wasting away, nor terminal illness, it's just over. Can you think of a better way? Sign me up for that ticket out.

Another thought I had was one that wasn't as original, but it's limited to a select few also. Here it is. When you leave the safety of the nest and your little home town, things like that, are a possibility. That's the excitement. That's what "gypsies" crave, and any nomadic people for that matter. The thought of staying in the same place forever, is hateful to us. It would be akin to being in prison, if you know what I mean. So yes they died, but don't we all, they died seeing something we will never really see. How awesome is that? How can you morn? Their lives are something to be celebrated. Is this a strange philosophy? My Daughter thinks so. I don't know. I

won't change it. It fits me, and that's good enough.



Did you ask yourself why I chose Political Science as a major yet? What about why I have never worked in politics since then? These are questions that I want you to keep in the back of your mind as I continue on with this chapter. I will answer both by the end I promise.



At the 4th year level, political science majors had to put on a model United Nations conference. We hosted over 100 high schools for an annual competition. We provided the schools with a list of topics to be discussed and voted on. The system used would be identical to that used in New York. An interesting hands on training tool, to teach students how difficult it is to interact with others and worse, to get people to agree to something at the same time.

Here is the strangest part. In running a mock United Nations, I lost my faith and optimism in politics as a model, for solving world

problems. That's not the worst of it. Its 30 years later, and I still don't have a better model or theory to offer. Can you believe I'm saying that? The guy that doesn't have any problems only solutions! He can't figure it out?

Politics is not morally just, nor will it ever be. You can't be moral and compromise. How do you give someone you hate or loath something valuable, knowing that they are going to use it for bad and not good, just to get something you want? How do you justify it in your own head from a moral standpoint? Impossible, See what I mean. Multiply that, times all of the compromises that you have to make over the span of a career? How can you not become jaded? How can you not lose sight of your goal? How can you ever reap the benefit of your fight? This is just some of the inherent conflicts.

Let's take the other side of the coin. You are elected and you refuse to compromise with "bad" men. You become more and more extreme in your opinions and world view. Politics is give and take and any extremist of any kind, will never be satisfied with it as a tool. Politics takes patience and extremist are not patient.

Politics and compromise go hand in hand. That is a given.

There will always be an inherent conflict between the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor. These mock UN's mirrored real politics in that the weak almost always lost and the rich countries/people almost always won. I didn't like that.

Finally, the strong almost always dominate the weak. That is why they are called "strong".....duh.

It is a fact of life that, the strong are almost always assholes though. I didn't want to be an asshole. We had enough assholes in the world. If I chose politics I would have to be surrounded by assholes. I would have to listen to assholes all day long. I would have to eat/sleep/and shit assholes. What was to keep me from becoming an asshole too? See my conflict? Who would chose that unless you liked assholes or were one?

Politics were controlled by the people/countries with money or something to offer. How do you make money? Some with their brains, but the majority have made it by taking it from others. Some took peoples' money, by hook or crook, but others by having no conscience. Now, you would think that an ex-interrogator wouldn't have a

conscience, but when it comes to taking other people to the laundry, that are innocent and don't deserve it, I just can't do it. I tried being a salesman, for a short time, but the same problem applied. I can't just take peoples' money without giving them something of value in return. Where I come from they call it "stealing" if you do otherwise.

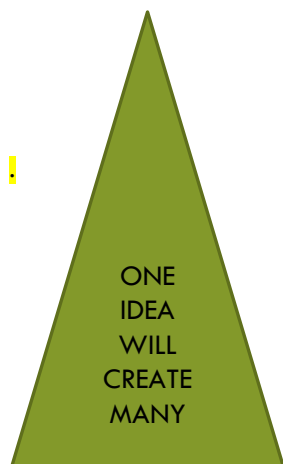
How did I get all this from a mock UN? It's simple. Here were our "future leaders" or at least a sampling of them anyway. We hope it wasn't representative. They didn't yet have guile or experience in hiding what they wanted. They were vicious, ruthless, and had no morality or conscience. Unless something major changes (and it hasn't yet).....we are done as a nation. It may take another 10 years or 50, but we're no different from Rome, or Greece, or Egypt now. The civilizations that digress to greed are always consumed from within and implode. We will do the same. Mark my words. This is what I saw then and I don't see anything to make me feel any different in 2013, than I did in 1987. Politics will always be run by assholes and thieves. It has to be logically. I would have to find something else to do with my life. I didn't tell Dr. Heinlein this, I don't think I even knew it then, just now, or

at least 3 months ago, when I started writing this book.

Now we will close this chapter with a final thank you to Dr. David Heinlein

taught was that important. The virtues and abilities that he inspired are the “wings of butterflies”. You don’t know what the effect was but it is there, none the less.

Thank you Sir. With My Total Respect and Admiration!



*How we affect
the world*

100 Ideas



As soon as I finish writing this little chapter, I’m going to go online and hopefully find out what happened to him. You know, I don’t even know if he had any children. He would have made a great parent. I think he would approve of the way my thoughts and “id” have turned out. He was one of the few people that I would even consider trying to impress. Yes, he was that important and what he believed and

Chapter 28
Meeting the Stapps



Let me introduce the rest of the world to Ken, Lorie, and Cynthia Stapp. They are your average or they would prefer “above average” family from the Midwest, Overland Park, Kansas, to be exact. This is one of the rich suburbs of Kansas City. Oh my, oh my, oh my, where do I begin? Believe it or not this may end up being the longest chapter in the book. Boy, do I have a few things to say. I’m going to try to tell this story exactly the way I perceived it at the time, and then maybe look back and reminisce or second guess my choices. Let’s see where this one leads.....

Cynthia Lynn Stapp. She was born on November 30th, 29 years ago. It doesn’t matter what year you are reading this. She was born 29 years ago *(I’m not stupid, you never tell a woman’s true age). I’m guessing 100 pounds soaking wet. When I met her, she looked just like Jaime Lee Curtis in “True Lies”. No, not when she dresses up like the hooker, I mean when she is like the “mom”. Sorry to disappoint you. She was maybe 5’3. To be honest, I’m not sure. She was just a little tiny thing, short hair and fiery. I think you get the picture. She wasn’t ugly, but not beautiful. She did know how



to change her appearance with makeup, I’ll give her that.

It was her eyes or her rose colored glasses that first caught my attention. She was new to one of Dr. Heinlein's classes and spouting off an opinion about something. I don't know what, but she was adamant about it. I thought interesting girl. Oh yea, she wasn't your normal student either. She was in her late 20's. Not your average college student to be sure. The class finished.....there was nothing else spectacular to report.

Later that same day, I had went to the cafeteria to buy a soda and study at the Student Union. There at a table was the same girl, arguing with 3 other guys about some topic. She may have been the redhead at that table, but she was beating all three of them like redheaded step children.



They didn't stand a chance. Sorry guys. You were out gunned from the git-go.

Oh, I had to meet this girl. This wasn't anything sexual. I hadn't met anyone other than



one of my sisters that I considered intelligent and worldly enough to even talk politics with. This would be a different experience. I walked over to the table and introduced myself to everyone and asked what they were talking about. They told me, and I told the guys it sounded like they were losing the fight. None of them disagreed with me. After a few minutes they were sufficiently humiliated and I sat down to take my brow beating.

It didn't happen. We sat there and talked for another hour. It was fascinating. I'll tell you this up front. Cynthia is the most intelligent woman I have ever met in my life, or am likely to ever meet in my life. Unfortunately, this first meeting ended way too soon. She had to leave and go to work. She was a hair dresser. She

had a chair at a little shop there in Springfield. Along with this came gay friends and the whole "hair dresser" scene. Yes, it is just like in the movies for you male readers. They

gossip and the gay guy is treated just like one of the girls. Freaks me out a little bit but, there it is. I did manage to get her number and we agreed to have a date later on in the week.

I walked her out of the Student Union and no shit, she even rode a motorcycle. Too, Too, cool for school. This woman had everything. I looked forward to our date every day until it happened. How many first dates have any

of you
had, that
lasted for
18 hours
(all
night)?
OK, 50%



of you got lucky, that cool. How many of that 50% can say it was wonderful, every single minute of it? I'm going to guess and say half.....or 25% of the original group. I think that sounds fair don't you. Yea, but how many can say that they spent that 18 hours talking about world politics, economics, religion, philosophy and whatever other subject we thought of? None.....too bad for you. I loved it, we did, and I have the T-Shirt.

Initially she didn't talk about her family much. I knew that her Grandpa Irvy was a barber in Greenfield.

This was a little town about 30 miles north of Springfield. I also knew that he was still a barber cutting hair at 75 years old. That was impressive. She had told me that her dad was from Greenfield and so was her mom's family. But, her dad and mom plus two brothers, all lived in Kansas City. We took the bikes to Greenfield once to see her grandpa and grandma. Irvy still wore a crew-cut that was perfect. You could have set a book on it...or a glass, it was that great. Grandma Stapp was just as pleasant. Just picture the Grandma feeding the hens, with the grain in her apron and you would have her. Both were just the nicest people in the world. Down to earth, true blue American through and through, exactly the same stock as Harry Truman came from (ideology and history not physical).

Did I mention before that my daughter Stephanie had been riding a motorcycle since she was 2 years old? She would sit behind me or in front of me, which ever she preferred at the time. I would connect her to me with a really wide weight belt. On her, it covered from her hips all the way to under her arms. There was no way she could slip out.

I know that many of you will go “Oh my god.....you subjected a 2 year old to that danger? How could you?

My response is, you live with a drunk that beats you in front of your kids, or beats them? Is that better? Or, you live in a home where nobody likes each other. There is no love. Is that better? You live in a home with no food in a ghetto with roaches on the wall.....is that better? You send your kids off to boarding school where it's safe and you don't have to deal with them.....is that better? For all of you with an opinion, different from mine, write your own book and tell us how wonderful it is to be you. I'd love to read it!

I have all the respect for your opinion. I have a wonderful, normal, happy kid/mom/adult. I also have a daughter that I love to sit and talk to. What do you have?.....is..... it better?

Off on another tangent.....back to the story

One day after school I went to see Cynthia at her beauty salon. She was cutting a guys' hair which, wasn't anything unusual. If I had to guess, I'd say that at least 40% of her customers were men. Anyway, this guy was an older gentleman, and he had that “preacher” atmosphere about him if you know what I mean. It's the same look you get from a used car salesman or government official. You just know that knowing them, is going to cost you something. Another clue is they always want to shake your hand. I think that this is to judge how much money that hand can hold, and how easy it will be to take your money from you. How strong a grip you have determines how tightly you are going to hold onto your money? A WEAK SHAKE, MAKES YOU A TARGET. I know that, what I just said is “poo”, but at least it's “pure poo”.

Always go with your gut instinct about someone. Ninety percent of the time it's accurate. You might make a few errors but you'll be right the majority of the time. My gut instinct about this guy was be wary. Maybe even “be afraid.....be very afraid”. Wait, I can paint an even simpler picture.

In the second ***ADDAMS FAMILY*** movie; "***ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES***", the little girl Wednesday is punished with Pugsly, her brother, and another character for not being "cheerful" and a joiner. They put them in a little cottage and force them to watch Disney movies all day long. At the end of the day they are all standing around as Wednesday and the others are let out. The camp Counselors ask "How do you feel now?" to Wednesday. She very slowly looks at them all and starts to smile. You just know that it's the smile of an axe murderer or psycho hose beast. The smile was scarier than a snarl. That was this guy. He smiled, appeared friendly, but so did the witch in Hansel and Gretel. No, I got it.....he reminded me of Jimmy Swagger or Jim Baker and Tammy Fae. Oh yea, that's it. It's right on the money.

Cynthia ended up going to work for him later on in an around about way. She interned for him in Jefferson City a couple of years later. This guy, who I thought had the warmth of dry ice, became the Governor of Missouri and later on the Attorney General

of the United States. Cynthia was the hair stylist for John Ashcroft. Can you believe that? How do I keep meeting all of these people? It's probably physics. You know, the theory of how opposites attract. They are assholes and I'm not. Therefore, using the theory of "opposites attract", I should be drawn to them. Remember though, in physics, opposites attract then cancel each other out or destroy each other. Boy, wouldn't that be a great job description....."What do you do for a living?" Oh you know.....I'm into asshole removal. It's a "shitty" job



but someone has to do it. You know assholes and how they are. Just because they have muscle, and they can tell the difference between a gas, a solid, or a liquid (most of the time), they think they should control all the rest of the body. Yea, I know, they talk a lot of shit, but be compassionate. You'd feel the same way if you had been fed shit your entire

life. Garbage in and garbage out, as the ol saying goes.

Recapping, Cynthia was 29, rode a motorcycle, was a hairdresser, student, and knew important people. She had a brain and knew how to use it. I think that's all it in a nutshell. She wasn't your average person that was for sure. Does it sound like an interesting match? I mean her and me of course.

I thought so.

When Cynthia got accepted for her internship in Jeff City I decided to leave Springfield and go to Joplin, Mo, where my parents lived I had a chance at a pretty good job in Joplin with Tri State Motor Transit. This was and still is, the primary weapons transporter in the United States. It doesn't matter if it's an M-16 or a nuclear missile. These are the guys that move it. The reason I had an "in" was my security clearance while I was an interrogator in the military. This allowed me to still work on classified projects. I became a dispatcher for them working with their "radioactive" fleet.

Now don't freak. We are not sending nukes all over the country with enough frequency to require dispatchers on a 24 hour basis. You have spent nuclear fuel, nuclear medicines that have to

be disposed of, new medicines and materials sent to hospitals or research facilities, the list is endless. That's why you need dispatchers, and you need lead lined containers to carry the materials in. Tri-State specialized in these high security containers and trucks. I don't know if they were the exclusive hauler for the DOD, but they were one of the top ones for sure.

I got the job. It was perfect. I was able to go to school during the day, work at night until midnight, then get up and do it again. I moved into my parents' house (along with a few others already there), so I had plenty of babysitters and Stephanie was always with family. Honestly, it couldn't have worked out any better right at that time. This lasted for about a year I guess. Then as always, something happens and change is the result. You know, this is the only guarantee in life other than death, is that change will happen no matter what. In this case, it was Cynthia.

She got accepted to John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, commonly known in diplomatic circles as SAIS, for her Masters in International Economics. If you have any intention of being a diplomat or career Foreign Service Officer, this is the school you go to. It is the pre-imminent school for our state department recruitment efforts. There wasn't any

question of her accepting. She did immediately. I encouraged her to do it. It was an honor. I bet less than 1% that apply got accepted. You don't turn down something like that, not ever!

I had a hard choice to make. No, that isn't quite accurate. I had a very hard choice to make. Even though she had been in Jefferson City, we had continued to see each other. Steph and I made trips on the motorcycle at least 2 or three times a month for the 6 months that she was there. Here was the quandary. I didn't love her. I respected her. I admired her. I considered her my equal and my friend. What I did not do was love her. I knew it. I never admitted it but I knew it deep down. I owe her an apology for that. I tried to fake it but there is no way that you can fake love. My advice is don't even try.

I knew that if she left and went to D.C. on her own, that it would be the last time that I saw her. The caliber of people she would meet and work with would blow her away. I didn't think she would ever come back to Missouri. Once gone, gone forever. Do I ask her to marry me? Do I give her up? That was my predicament.

Cynthia's problems with the situation on the other hand, was different but just as acute. I didn't find this out until years later. Here was her

side of the story and what she remembered of the same time:

"She told me that she had grown very fond of me and my daughter over the last two years and we were a part of her life that made her happy. She didn't want to give that up. She knew that if she left without us that would be it. I didn't have the want or ability to stick around anywhere for very long. She was right, it was the truth. Many relationships had been started on mutual respect and admiration. This could develop into love from that".

My intelligence would be an asset to her career. She wanted to be a diplomat. Having a spouse that was multi-lingual, well-traveled, and schooled, would be an advantage that many would not have. I couldn't disagree with that either. It was the whole "family plan" that posed a problem for her. Cynthia did not have a maternal bone in her body. The compassion required to be a mother just didn't exist or the gene was inactive, I don't know. She had the dilemma of knowing that we were a package deal. You don't get one without the other. Never would. Her mind was logical. I guess she decided that a little of what you want is better than none of what you want, eh?

We must have talked about it at least for 2 months before we finally came to a decision. It was all pretty much based

on logic and not on emotion or love. Go figure, you got to have love to base a decision on it, I guess. We decided to go ahead and get married. That's when I found out a lot more about Cynthia, and her parents, as well as their wealth.

Cynthia and her parents decided to handle all of the wedding details. No problem from my standpoint. They could handle everything as far as I was concerned. I never even wanted a big wedding. Hell, from my point of view, I would have been just as happy going to a justice of the peace. Since I didn't have a preference, let her have a big wedding.

A big wedding. That's an understatement. They booked a church in Springfield called Drury Chapel. Doesn't sound like much does it. It was only the premier socialite church in a city of 125,000. It was no joke to get married there. I guess it could seat about 400. It reminds me of the church that all the presidents go to in Washington before a big event, like an inauguration. It's about the same size and the interior is the same. It wasn't allowed for just everyone either. When they told me, I thought what the hell kind of pull does Cynthia's family have?

I found out about 40 million worth of pull. That kind of cheddar will buy you a wedding wherever you want one. Again, it wasn't just me I had to worry about, but my daughter as well. Was this

something that would be good for her or bad? What about the future? Would it help her or hurt her. Would it make her a better person or a rich snob? These were all important questions that didn't have an answer. Bottom line was, it left everything even more confusing than before.

I honestly couldn't tell you at that time if this was an opportunity or if this was a disaster waiting to happen. What do you think? What would you have done? No love, but respect, and now the opportunity for your daughter to have opportunities you never had. The kind of opportunities that only money makes available. Was I that kind of person? Was I a gold digger? By definition, a gold digger would be someone who hung out or lived with someone for their money, and not for love, right? Wasn't that exactly what I was about to do? Intentional at first or not, that wouldn't matter I don't think. Oh shit.....
.....Weird, too weird, reliving this memory had actually made my pulse quicken, and I felt the anticipation that I felt when I was making the decision 30 years ago. I didn't know that it was possible after all this time.

I couldn't deny Stephanie that opportunity. I just couldn't. I did make myself a promise. I swore that I would never accept a handout from Cynthia's parents or their money. It didn't matter how much we needed it. It didn't matter the reason. I wouldn't accept it. That was the only way that I could live with myself through all of this. Under those conditions; yes, I could and I did. The known advantages outweighed the unknown. I'm proud to this day to say that I never accepted a single dime from them for myself. They have treated Stephanie like one of their own, and for that I am grateful. Thank you Ken and Lori. Sorry, let's continue.

The actual wedding was a big event. Her side had about 200 people and my side had 20. Come on, I had already been married 4 times. How excited do you think my family was going to get over a fifth wife? Both our Families did like each other so there wasn't that hassle to deal with thank god. My lord it was long. Now don't laugh at us but I'm going to tell you a truth that I "suspect" happens more than we hear about: We were so tired by the end of it all that we fell asleep on the way to the condo (it was a 3 hour limo ride). When we got to Lake of the Ozarks, we got unpacked at her parents

condo, fell asleep again, and didn't consummate our marriage until the next afternoon. I mean really, we had been seeing and living together off and on for over 3 years. A ceremony wasn't going to suddenly change everything in a moment, seriously! It may have taken a little while but we got the job done. Good enough, and let's continue.

The whole engagement and marriage had to happen pretty quickly. We had to have everything done and ready to move to Washington, D.C., within a month and a half so she could start the spring semester at SAIS. Tri State had terminals all over the U.S. They had one just 40 miles from D.C. Perryville, MD, and it was situated at the top of the Chesapeake Bay right where the Susquehanna River, runs into the Bay. It was a beautiful area that I was familiar with. Aberdeen Proving Grounds was only 20 miles away. I had lived there a couple of times for short periods. It was the military's' home, for Ordinance Disposal School. That was my dads' specialty remember?

I was able to get the transfer. Just by sheer luck they had an opening for a dispatcher right at that time. It looked like everything was going to work out. I went

ahead to Maryland to get myself situated in the new job and to get us a place to live. It took about a month. I found an apartment in Havre de Grace, about 20 miles east of Baltimore. Good enough to get started. So here we go again.

There were two things about that trip that really stand out in my mind. One was kind of funny and the other one was not. Let's start with the funny one first. I had a car in 1988 that I consider to be one of the best that the Ford Motor Company ever built. It was a 1977 Ford Gran Torino Elite. I had the 351 Cleveland engine, with a four speed standard transmission. That car would run like a bat out of hell or like the most luxurious car you ever drove. It was awesome. I had rebuilt the engine that summer in anticipation of the trip, and it ran great all the way until the mountains in West Virginia. When we hit the mountains the car started to screw up, and I mean it started to screw up badly.

Every time we started to go up a hill, it would start to sputter, miss, and lose all its power. Finally, it would completely stall out. No matter how much I tried to floor the accelerator it just didn't have any power. I would pull over to the side, get out, raise the hood and

tell Cynthia to start the engine. Every single time it would fire right up and run just as smooth as a kitten. I'd close the hood, get back in the car and start off again. It would run great until it went under a load (like up a hill) then the same thing again. I bet it happened at least 10 more times before I figured out what was happening. The clue was that every time I lifted the hood, it would start running better again. Close the hood, it would run until you had to push down on the accelerator, then it would die. You know, as with most things this was operator error of course. When I rebuilt the engine I did too good of a job. The valves were so tight that when I would push down on the accelerator I was sucking the insulation of the hood of the car into the carburetor. I didn't have the cover on. On those cars you really didn't need it, to have the engine run, like in today's cars. God, the answer was so simple but the problem so frustrating for hours. It must have been one of those situations where "angst" is required to proceed. Do you know what I mean? Once I "thunked" it out, no problem from then on. God, I felt stupid!

The next one wasn't me being stupid. It was Cynthia being that way. Don't ask me

why, I have no clue, not even 30 years later why she did this, or thought this. Somehow or some way, she got it into her head that when she got married she would no longer need to be medicated with Xanax. Hell, prior to this trip I didn't even know that she took Xanax. It was no big deal to me. All of my sisters were medicated almost their entire lives. I was well aware of the benefits of mommas little helper believe me. Now if your manic depressive, and you are medicated, why in the world would you think that being married will cure everything and you no longer need your medications? That is exactly what she thought. After the third day of the trip and for the next 30 days, she cried every single day. I swear it was almost 24/7, non-stop.

I remember thinking oh shit, what the hell had I gotten me and my daughter into? Why, was this woman crying, all the time? I didn't even have the chance to be a bad husband or a good one, so it couldn't be that. I swear, she made all of us miserable. She finally fessed up, that during our entire relationship she was prescribed the drug. She was afraid that if I found out I'd be pissed or something. I don't know. Anyway, she hadn't taken any since the day we got married (about 4 weeks before). Needless to say we

got her back on her medication pretty damn quickly. Things were better for a while after that. At least she was able to go ahead and get started at SAIS. The end result was I had a job, she was in school, and everything would settle down. At least that is what I was hoping for. No luck of course.

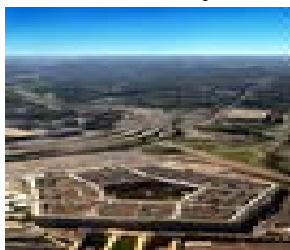
The other thing she had forgotten to mention was that she had never been away from home before. What I mean by that is that she had never been so far away from Kansas City that she couldn't go home when she got a little stressed out. 200 Miles just isn't the same as 1100 miles. So, here she was, just married, no drugs, new family, new mother, new student, isolated Great, she decided to quit at the time when she probably needed Xanax the most.

There was one other major problem. When I met Cynthia I was earning about 700.00 per month. Not a great amount by any means, but enough for me and my daughter to live on at the time. I worked my ass off and went from that to earning over 60,000.00 per year and us living in Skyline in Falls Church, Virginia. These are luxury condos overlooking the Washington Monument. It really didn't matter though. It wasn't enough. It would never be enough no matter

how much I earned. I just wouldn't be her daddy. I would never be adequate enough for her.

This was a different situation for me that's for sure. Usually, it was just the opposite. I was the superior one, and everyone else was inferior. I didn't much care for it. I just want to say as a side note that since that happened, I have made a conscience effort not to make others feel inadequate no matter what the situation. It's not right and it's angst that can be avoided. All of these things were building at the same time but no one incident was enough to bring it all to an end.

All of it changed with one little incident that was minor in one angle and major in another. It made me question



how much I was willing to sacrifice both of myself and of my daughter to secure her well-being, in the future. The cost in my own mind had steadily been increasing as the days progressed. I tried to make her happy. I had never

met anyone I couldn't make happy for at least a little while. She was being a tough nut to crack that was for sure.

It all became insignificant and not worth diddly. I threw it all away and told Cynthia it was over, without us even having ever having a serious argument or fight. We just didn't disagree that way. We argued points but it was more in the line of a debate than an argument. This was different. This was something I would not and could not tolerate. She hurt my daughter. No one will ever be allowed to hurt my daughter without there being a consequence. I would hunt someone down and make them miserable for the rest of their lives for even attempting such a thing. I'm totally serious. You can have all of the gold in China, you can have all the power in the world, you fuck with my daughter and I will destroy you.

Knowing this, she did it anyway. If I ever thought it was really intentional I would have killed her, but I know it wasn't. It was just the way that she was raised (and now she needed to be medicated). Cynthia was OCD about towels and clothes being folded and put away in drawers or hung up just exactly so. You know these types of people don't you?

Steph and I liked to have a clean house but we weren't compulsive about it. When you have kids you really can't be now can you? I came home from work one afternoon and everything seemed pretty normal. Cynthia was in the kitchen cooking and Stephanie was in her room doing her homework. It wasn't too difficult to tell that they had been fighting. When I asked Stephanie what was going on she stuttered a little and told me that she had gotten into trouble for her clothes being messy in her drawer. The clothes did not bother me but the stuttering did. Where the hell did that come from? I had never heard her stutter before.

What I found out was that Cynthia would slap the top of Stephanie's hands when she would do something wrong. It was so bad that it was frightening Steph. Well, that is that. I went into the kitchen, looked Cynthia in the eye, and told her it was over. Get the fuck out, and if she ever laid a hand on my daughter I would kill her. My reaction was extreme and to this day I regret it. Cynthia is not a hateful or mean person nor did she really abuse Steph. It was the mis-perceptions of all three of us and how we saw the world around us. Cynthia, thought she was doing well by

not spanking my daughter (the hand thing wasn't hard, but frequent?), and Steph was more worried about constantly getting in trouble than the hand thing itself.

The one thing that did come out of all of this was the fact that Cynthia was not meant to be a parent. She did not like it, but she did tolerate it. She liked my brain but tolerated me. Honestly, my emotions were pretty close to the same. I loved her brain but only liked her, I tolerated her family and their "superior" attitude. You get the picture.

I think we both realized it at the same time. Neither of us were the types to be satisfied with "tolerable" if you know what I mean. Through mutual consent we decided to get a divorce right then. There wasn't any emotions, no screaming, or throwing things, it was more the conclusion of a business arrangement. There is a clue, huh? How can a five year relationship end like that? That was Cynthia through and through.

I do have to describe to you the very last time I saw her as she walked out the door. You're going to love this.

We came to the decision to divorce without any problem at all. The actual nuts and bolts of the separation were not quite so easy. I guess I

should not have expected them to be. I don't know what I was thinking. Anyways, the furniture movers were done (remember she has money, so she can pay to have people do that kind of thing for her). We were both bleeding pretty well from all the little cuts we had thrown back and forth. Relax.....they were only verbal stabs, and not the real thing. I've often thought these were more painful, but what can you say?



Do you remember that I told you a ways back that the walls in the apartment were all glass? It makes the apartments look twice the size under normal circumstances. For me, it was from here to infinity, and beyond!

Cynthia was standing in the doorway, getting ready to leave. I was sitting on the only chair (a dining room chair), in the middle of the living room, waving goodbye. She closed the door. I turned to my right and looked at myself in the mirror. I saw me sitting there, in the background was a

perfect blue sky, a few puffy clouds going by, and the Washington Monument just over my shoulder. God I wish I had a camera at that moment. It really was perfect. Oh well, opportunities lost, Move on, let's go.....There is still a hell of a lot of future to get through!

Chapter 29

Meeting my first true “Entrepreneur”, Mark Soresi of Soresi Chemical

Up to this point I had met men who I thought were capable of running their own business. All of them had worked for the government in one form or another. Mark Soresi was the first person that I thought truly made it on his own merits and through his own sheer determination. He did not come from a rich family or use old money to start his business. Guts, determination and a lot of hard work allowed him to get as far as he did. This is 1991 by the way. My how time flies when you are having fun.



On paper, Soresi chemical consisted of Eastern Chemical Waste Systems, (a remedial cleanup arm of the corporation) and Soresi Chemical, which handled consulting services on hazardous chemical waste disposal. These were the chemist and the salesmen. They all worked at the corporate offices on 14th St. N.W. in D.C. It was a pretty decent address let me tell you.

Eastern was not quite so



pretty. It was down at 1525 W. Street (huh, I didn't know that I still remembered the address). This was down in the projects. Where else are you going to put hazardous materials? Funny thing is they

built the BET Television station right next door years later.

Do you remember the movie “Executive Decision”



with Kurt Russell and John Leguizziamo? Russell was dressed in a tux from a black tie event. That was Mark Soresi all of the time. Slick Willy was a term I used. The man was smart though. Very smart. You had to admire him for that. I did not agree with everything he did, but I did not need to. When he walked into a room all of the women would notice. Hell, all of the men would too for that matter. He had that kind of a presence when he entered a room.

He started Soresi Chemical Group from soap and cleaning

products that he ordered in bulk from India or wherever, then he would repackage and sell the soaps to hotel chains and places like that. You know the little, once used, disposable soaps and

shampoos. From that in 10 years he had a business probably worth 5 million give or take.

His main revenue when I worked for him was the cleanup of hazardous waste spills or closure of

plants and labs with chemicals that needed to be disposed of properly. You have to remember that this was not that long after Times Beach and Love Canal and the EPA’s creation. Just 10 years later if I remember correctly.

I was responsible for the dispatching and scheduling of these HAZMAT loads into specific waste facilities throughout the US. One would take acids, another, cyanides, another soil contaminated with hydrocarbons, you get the idea. The job was tough in more than one way. We only

had 3 over the road drivers and they had to travel a lot of stops over a long distance. These were the types of runs that just ate up a drivers hours that were available through the week. When you carried these types of loads you had better be in compliance with DOT regulations believe me. That was my job. I had the responsibility of making sure these loads were loaded legally, transported according to all state and federal regulations and finally to make sure that the company stayed in compliance with DOT and the EPA. All 50 of them, because each state had their own version of the federal EPA. I also had to make sure all of the hazardous waste manifest were in proper order and filled out completely. If they were not, when we got to the facility the receiving facility would refuse the load. This caused us to be out of compliance and liable for up to 10K a day in fines. Needless to say a small company like ours could not afford even a single fine. It was a high pressure job, but I loved every minute of it. I do like a challenge!

There were a couple of harrowing experiences and a couple of times where we ran illegal as hell but got away with it. Sometimes you have to bend the rules a little to get the job done. I don't care

what the industry or job. The rules are important but not more important than the job or your workers safety. Sometimes you have to make a command decision and take the chance. It's what a manager or boss is paid for. You don't abuse it by no, means, and the ability to know when and where, is what makes the difference between a good manager, and a bad manager.

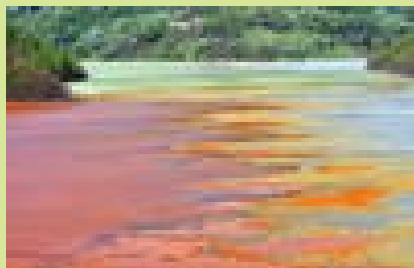
Karma, I love and hate that word. I hope that it doesn't come back to bite my ass from this job. What I mean is that the very worst of the toxic waste was sent to Louisiana. Where is the best place in the US to send toxic chemical? Way down da bayou, eh? Seriously, they had two methods of disposal that were unique, and approved by the EPA.

One was deep well injection. This method involved mixing the toxic materials with mud into a slurry, then pump it two miles into the earth below the water table, where it would stay forever. The idea came from a method used off shore in the oil fields to plug and abandon old oil wells that didn't produce any more. They would pump dense mud down the whole first which would plug the hole, then complete the process by filling

in the shaft with concrete. Once this cured the well was able to be dismantled and abandoned. The pipe is cut off at the ocean floor and the oil company moves on to the next well.

Somebody decided that this technology could be used for nuclear or hazardous chemical disposal. It sounds good right? Pump the materials deep in the ground and plug the hole. It was a good idea with bad application by the company trying it.

What ended up happening was that they kept mixing



This is actual water color. Not enhanced. Thirsty?

these chemicals with mud in big open pits to make their slurry until it was the right specific gravity to send down the hole. There were a few problems. The guys mixing everything were just back hoe and track hoe operators. They had no clue what they were mixing or why. The second

problem was that the materials didn't solidify enough. They didn't take into consideration all of the rain in this area of the United States.

Dumb.....but it's hard to think of all the variables isn't it? Bottom line was it sat, and sat, and sat, and they couldn't pump it down the hole. Without the right specific gravity, it wouldn't stay down. Physics is a mother isn't it?

The EPA ended up closing the site and pulling the disposal permit of



the facility.

Now the other was more modern and interesting.

You can go to Morgan City, Louisiana, and still see the plant the huge "vitrification"

kiln they used.

The plant is closed but the facility still exist.

Here was the idea behind this method of disposal. It was really kind of cool. The technology was proven and sound. Here was another case of people screwing up something that could have worked. Marine Shale (the name of the company), would

take cyanides and other really hazardous materials and slowly mix them with sand and heat the mixture to 1500 degrees until the sand melted into glass. Through the process the hazardous waste would be encased in glass. Glass does not break down for over 200,000 years. So the theory went, you encased the materials in glass and hopefully the technology will exist in the future, to get rid or treat the waste. It works unless you do one stupid thing.



The material that came out the kiln after the process looked like lumps of coal or black glass. Marine Shale instead of landfilling the material like they proposed

in their permit, they sold the material to the Louisiana Department of Transportation for road beds in the southern part of the state. It would be covered with asphalt and ok right. It was a good use of the

materials, right?

Wrong.....guess what happens when 80,000 lb. trucks run over glass day in and day out? The glass breaks....and guess what....you've just contaminated the roadways with cyanide waste. Not good.....not good at all. Greed did it again. Some asshole decided that his making money was more important than the lives and health of the people who lived around them in that part of the state. This is the *New America* again! You can keep it.

Remember I mentioned Karma before. Well, here's the rest of the story that I forgot to tell you about. My grandson lives right in between both places. He lives in Houma, Louisiana and I pray to god something doesn't happen as a result of my actions. He isn't going to leave and he's 14 now. Oh well, only the future will tell us. Wait and see, (something I've never done well, eh?).

Chapter 30

Learning to Bar Fight - Some You



Win and Some You Lose,

Redding, Pennsylvania

There was one more little
itty bitty story I want to tell

you. It's not about doing
medical waste, this was a
leisure story. I had a driver
named Mike Leshner. I met
him in Joplin while I worked
for Tri-State. He drove
weapons drums and his home
terminal was Perryville, MD,
where I transferred to.

He lived in Redding
Pennsylvania, about 80 miles
north of Baltimore. He
invited me up for New Year's
one winter, and I had so much
fun I went back every year
for the next 5 years.

In Redding and in many of
the towns and smaller cities,
the local volunteer fire
departments don't have to
tax the local citizens in order
to operate or to generate
revenue for their day to day
operations. They've come
up with a much better and
easier solution. The fire
departments have bars
attached to them! They use
the revenue profits
generated from the bar to
support the fire department.
Isn't that a great way to have a
service and not tax everyone
without them getting
something for it? I don't
know about you but I think
giving people liquor and taking
their money, then using the
money for something useful is
the way to go. Kudos to you
Pennsylvania!

Mike told me he was taking me to the fire department for the New Year's Eve Party, and by the look on my face, he had to tell me everything that I just told you afterward. Anyway, we arrived and the entire bar had been decked out in party balloons and New Year's Eve stuff. In all my years I had never been to a real New Year's Eve party and I was looking forward to this. It was just like on TV

There were families, kids, grandmas, mothers, aunts and uncles, all together having a great time. They played games, and told embarrassing stories about Mike when he was growing up. I remember thinking to myself that this is the part of life that someone like me didn't get to live. Traveling all over the world was wonderful but the price to be paid was not being around everyone your entire life, and not having that closeness to others (not on the family level but with friends and acquaintances, if you know what I mean.

So, we are all sitting at a table and midnight comes and goes with everyone doing the normal celebration at the stroke of midnight. About an hour later, that's when things started to get interesting. I

noticed about one o'clock, that all of the women and children were leaving or had already left. I thought it a little strange that the men were not leaving with them. I had to ask Mike why. "Dude, where is everyone going?" "Patience, patience, he told me with a really big grin on his face. You're going to love this!" I gave him a look like "what the hell are you up to?" I knew that it was something. Oh yea, it was something.

At 1:14, Mike turned to me and said 1 minute.....tick....tock.....tick....tock..The seconds passed, until the minute hand clicked to 1:15. Right at that moment all hell broke loose. I heard a yee- hah and then boom the lights went out. I woke up and looked at the clock and it was 1:30. What had happened? Damn, my head hurt. I shook my headwho dat....who dere.....I had gotten knocked stupid.

God damn it, I had missed the whole thing.

It was a ballroom brawl. It was just like on television in the old western saloon. You know where you have the guys swinging from the chandeliers and bar stool being broken over someone's head. I was the guy



that had the barstool broken over my shoulders and head. It knocked me out, damn it, now I would have to come back again next year.

The next year came and this time I was more careful. I must have lasted at least 8 or 9 minutes before being knocked stupid again. Oh well, you win some and you lose some. I went back 5 more times. Some I survived, some I didn't. It was totally great and totally a guy thing. Girls just don't get it. Nobody was out to kill each other or seriously hurt each other. It was a fight for the fun of it. Now how often does the average person get to do that? I recommend it for bringing in any New Year. Nobody really wins. Even if you win you are as sore as the person that lost. Is it the mass suffering? No, I don't think so, maybe it's more primal, but if you're pissed at someone, what a great way to get it out and become friends again at the beginning of the year. Good idea.....oh yea!

I've missed that and Maryland crabs, and crab cakes the most. Have to say bye though. It wasn't by my choosing. The bastard Bob Bohager, finally got what he wanted. He had argued and politicked his way into having my facility fall under him. I lost the fight plain and simple. This was going to be a

demotion for me. My drivers all hated the idea because we worked well together. He treated his solid waste drivers like shit, they knew that they could expect the same. It sucked for everyone. I'd have to work twice as hard with no credit or chance of advancement. I had fought the "man", and lost. My future as facility manager was going to come to a rapid end. The next step he would argue is "Why have a facility manager and that cost, when the solid waste facility had everything in place the corporation needed? He would be right, I couldn't argue it. From a business standpoint, it made total sense. Worse, that is how Waste Management got so large; thru acquisition of its smaller competitors, get rid of their management, and keep the rest operating. They would use their infrastructure to manage. I couldn't find a reason I would be spared especially since Bohager would limit my access to corporate (i.e. chain of command). I had to make a choice, either wait for the end, and hope it did not come, or start looking for a new job immediately.

You know me, I'm not a wait and see kind of guy. Yea I'm bragging here. I'm not a vindictive kind of guy. That is until you screw with my people. He hadn't done it yet

but I knew that he would in the end. I gave him a little something to remember me by.

My best driver (and very good friend was Tyrone Meade, yep another Tyrone, but this one was big and black. When I say big, I'm talking 275, 6'2 kind of big. Is that big? I took care of Tyrone. He wasn't happy unless he was working 100 plus hours per week. The man was awesome and he was the only one I ever saw that could work as long and as hard as I did. When he was on the road he didn't stop. He even pissed in a bottle so that he would save that 15 minutes and use it driving. The man was a work horse. Even better, he hated Bohager. Bohager and pulled him a couple of times to run solid Waste trucks....a real demotion in the eyes of my drivers. All of the solid waste drivers thought they were prima donnas. They were just waiting for them. Sorry guys, but I got Tyrone a job with TIP. Screw you. It gets even better.

Tyrone offered to do me a favor in return. This is a real favor, not a pussy half assed favor. Tyrone offered to take me and my daughter, and my entire household goods, and my car in the inside of one of our medical waste trailers.....all the way to

Missouri. It was only a thousand miles one way. He would fuel up before we left.....drop me off.....and refuel at our facility in North Carolina on the way back. No cost all for free. What were they going to do fire him or me? Screw them and screw Bohager. I hope he caught a lot of shit over that one. We did it. No problems. I drove a MG midget and it fit in the trailer perfect. How's that for leaving a goodbye nasty gram. I think it was unique.

Well, it's 1994 and we got to move on. Time for another adventure or regroup whichever comes first. Here we go.....
.....
.....back to Missouri!

*Welcome
Home.....&.....Running
Away.....1994 - 1995*

Chapter 31

Crank and Meth Capitol of the World –

The world changes doesn't it? That's the one constant. I've experienced it and lived it more than most. You know what I mean. I never expected the changes in a city like Joplin like I found when I went back. You wonder about how a drug can change a population. There it is in Joplin for all to see.



Joplin, Missouri

Don't go there.

Don't visit and keep your kids as far away as possible. The city is evil and all its inhabitants have been changed. Friends that I've known for 30 years ripped me off or 20 or 30 dollars, not

caring of -the consequences. The town is so eat up that stealing from each other or turning each other in, is the norm and not the exception. I saw it up close and personal. I did it. I partied, I've partied all



my life. But I've always known when to quit and when I had to work.

Meth had stopped these people from any aspirations other than to find money to get high again. I stayed as long as I could but I had to leave. It was depressing.

remember the second *Back to the Future*? Marty McFly changed the past with the Sports Almanac, and Biff got hold of the book and created a casino and gambling empire. The end result was the town was destroyed and nobody but thugs and thieves wanted to live there. That is it. That's the picture. The town is self destructing from the inside.

The

cops and politicians are corrupt and they feed off each other. Civil rights and **freedom do not exist. That is not America.** Beware! I'm not even going to contemplate that place again!



My daughter and I had the



I'm going to describe it exactly the way it is but without the glamor. Do you

opportunity to leave and start again in Louisiana....Let's go daughter....right now! We're going to stay with my sister Cheyenne.

Chapter 32

Leaving the Dying and Getting on with Living

*Bienvenue en Louisianne :
Welcome to Louisiana*

Never really thought about it until just now, but I think I know where home is for me. Is that a strange statement to start a chapter with? I always thought it was Missouri, the place of my birth, but it's not. It's really not. How bizarre a revelation.

I think home for me is Louisiana. If home is a place you are touched by, and miss when you're gone, then if that's not home it should be and you better move. I never knew that Louisiana would touch me that way. I want to tell you one other thing, once the people and culture touch you, you're never the same.

I'm not all sentimental, and it's got its good and bad points like everywhere else, but the people over all are some of the friendliest on earth. I've got a lot to say about it, so sit back and relax and let me tell you about the land of the "coonaise" (pronounced coon ass). That is: people who live south of I-10 down to the end of the earth, and I mean the end of the earth!

Before we really begin with this story I have to talk about my sister Cheyenne Autumn Glassford August 22, 1972 – July 20, 1998. May She Rest In Peace (but she won't).

Cheyenne was the youngest of my brothers and sisters. The girl was beautiful, intelligent, and a sociopath or at least psychotic. I loved her dearly. When she took her lithium you really, really liked her. Without her meds she might take all of your clothes outside and put them in a pile and burn them. You just never knew with her. God, how her boyfriends' dealt with it I'll never know.

Prior to this I really didn't know Chey. She was only 3 years old when I left home and started my life. Just a baby, and by the time I came

back she was a teenager. I could tell you that she was as sharp as a whip, a cheerleader, and to my dad's demise "color blind". Do you know what I mean when I say that? OK, how about smoke jumper? No, that what white guys call girls who like black men. Now do you see it?

We were taught not to be prejudice all the time we grew up. I mean if you even uttered a derogatory statement toward any race, you were guaranteed to get your ass beat. I mean there was 0 tolerance for it. So, it was strange that our Dad would be prejudice toward her dating blacks. Go figure, I do know that initially she did it to just piss him off, later I think she just got used to it. I don't know, don't care, it was never any of my business anyway.

Now I had been to Louisiana once before about 9 months. It wasn't a pleasure trip. My Dad and I had to go down because she had been shot in the face by her boyfriend in Houma, LA. Like I had mentioned before, gruesome deaths weren't unusual in my family. No, I'd have to say they were more of the norm than abnormal. Let's see:

- Grandpa Glassford - Died while working in the railroad yard. Run



over and chopped in half.

- Cousin Gary Glassford – Blown up by a grenade in Vietnam. Closed Casket
- Aunt Susan Glassford – Died while talking to sisters at the kitchen table. Massive Embolism
- Aunt Susan's Husband – died 3 months after Aunt Susan on top of their house roofing. Massive Heart Attack. Had to be lifted down rope.
- John Glassford – My Dad - Walked into his house after drinking with Army buddies all night and then driving 50 miles to fish for 5 hours with them. Walked in the door and died of massive heart attack.
- Amber E. Glassford – Sister - Died at 19 years old in car accident with drunk driver. She was decapitated. All 6 girls in the car were killed.
- Cheyenne Autumn Glassford - 26 years

old. Dragged to death while trapped under a car after a fight with another girl at a bar at 2:00 a.m. Died alongside the road, bleeding to death with 46 percent of her body was ground off.

- Michael T. Glassford – Me...Survived premature birth, eating rat poison, nearly having hand decapitated, 1 plane crash, 2 helicopter crashes, shot three times, stabbed twice.....still here!

Now you have to admit, that within the realm of 1st cousins or closer, that's a lot of "not dying peacefully in your bed", don't you agree? I wonder every once in a while how I will die. I doesn't really matter to me. I just hope it's interesting and not boring. The odds are in my favor!

Back to the story, we got there pretty quickly, after finding out that Cheyenne had been shot. From the time we found out to the time my Dad and I drove there, it was only 11 hours. That's pretty good considering its 850 miles doorstep to doorstep. I don't think we stopped except to get

fuel. After all, this was my Dad's baby girl and last child. Now my Dad loved everyone one of us kids, there wasn't any doubt about that. Everyone one of us knew it. Each was different, and that was alright. But, we all knew that Chey was his favorite. He didn't observe a single speed limit going down. We got there fast fast!

Cheyenne had been in an argument with her boyfriend in their apartment in Houma. Cheyenne was a wild child and pretty hard to live with. She had pissed her asshole boyfriend off going manic, and he had shot her in the face (right cheek) with a little 22 pistol. Oh it doesn't end there. The punk puts her in a car and tells her that he is going to drive her to the hospital. Chey was drifting in and out of consciousness and realized that they had passed the hospital and were heading away from it. She did what she had to do. She jumped out of the car while it was going 35 miles an hour. The car behind her screeched to a stop. An old man was driving and he ended up taking Cheyenne to the hospital in Houma. Houma couldn't handle brain injuries so they transferred to Thibodeaux General a, a larger regional hospital. I will tell you that the guy who shot her got 25 years.

He still sits in a Louisiana prison today!

Most people die immediately when they get shot in the head but not Cheyenne. No, the bullet deflects off the cheek bone and hits the back of the skull. It then rides around the back of the skull 4 or 5 times just between the skull and the sack that protects the brain. There wasn't any brain injury or bleeding. In other words, she was fine. She left the hospital 2 days later after observation. She wasn't any the worse for wear can you believe it? I could, but then again, I knew "us".

There was one little thing I remember while waiting to find out Cheyenne's condition at the hospital in Thibodaux. There were two ladies sitting in the Critical Care Emergency Waiting Room when we got there from Missouri. There were both in their 50's I'm guessing, and dressed as farmers' wives. I listen to them not because I was being nosy, but because I was bored. If there was ever a boring place on earth, it's a waiting room at a hospital or a waiting area to see some government official.

I listened to them and I wondered what language they were speaking. It sounded like French but then again I couldn't understand the

dialect. I listened, and listened, but it wasn't any use. I just didn't understand the language.

I sat there for a while longer talking to my dad. We just waited. Suddenly, out of the blue, I realized that I was understanding the conversation the ladies were having. They hadn't been speaking a foreign language at all, as a matter of fact, they had been speaking English the whole time. It had been in such a sing song Cajun pattern that I couldn't understand it. Some linguist huh? Funny, but after living there for over 10 years, it sounds just like normal English to me now!

Anyway, Cheyenne ended up being all right and went home three days later. My dad and I went back to Missouri. Even though the incident that brought us down was bizarre, I found I really liked Cajuns. They were down to earth and happy in general. That was more than I could say for other places that I had been in the world!

Now Cheyenne knew how bad Joplin was getting, and she knew that I really wanted to leave.

I had talked to her on the phone and she invited Stephanie and me down, she said the oil field was booming, and there was plenty of work for anyone. Offshore sounded interesting, I had never really thought about it as a career or even opportunity. More important for me was the chance to get to know Cheyenne. Everyone said she was crazy but hell they said the same thing about me, but I know I'm only "touched". I enjoyed talking to her on the phone and decided why not.....getting away from Joplin before it ruined me or my daughter was necessary right then.....I jumped and the trip was interesting to say the least. Louisiana here we come.

The trip down was interesting. You should have seen us. We had an 18 ft. double axle trailer loaded to the gills. That wasn't impressive. What was impressive, was the entire load being pulled by a 1987 Sunbird. This was one of the littlest cars built that year. It only had a little 4 cylinder engine that had over 200,000 miles on it. The trailer and load were about twice the size and weight of the car. You know how it goes though, "a man has to do what he has to

do". In this case it was "take the chance".

We made it a total of 70 miles (to Springfield) before we had two trailer tires blow out at the same time. I found out the tires were all dry rotted and it would be a miracle if the other two didn't go also. My cousin Wade had a tire shop in Springfield and he hooked me up with a couple of used tires and a couple of extras to take with me. I really owed him for that.

The car didn't have AC or any other amenity and by sheer luck we were able to make it down there. There were a couple of incidents of over- heating but that was to be expected. I think it took us about 20 hours of driving straight thru, but somehow, somehow we got there. The car died 3 weeks later. God rest its soul. I'm proud of it for putting forth the effort in the end and going out like a man! Uh Ra.

Chapter 33

Getting to Know the Deep South



You don't know how thankful I was when we saw the "Welcome to Louisiana" sign when we entered the state. Neither of us had ever been to the Deep South before. Why do they call it the "Deep South" anyway? My daughter just told me that she thinks it's because it's like being in a whole that is so

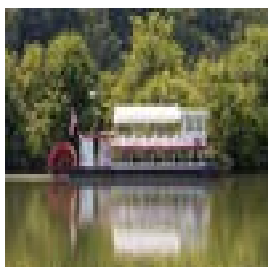
deep you can't get out of it. I think that she might be right. I never did know the answer to that one. It would make a

good trivia question. I wonder how many "Southerners" know the answer.

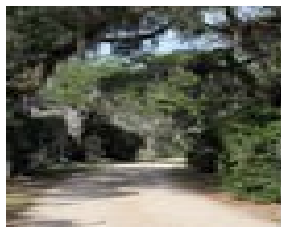
Cheyenne lived in a town

of about 10,000 population. It's Houma, La, an oil field town 40 miles south and west of New Orleans. The only reason it existed was to support the offshore oil industry in the Gulf of Mexico. I think it's the first appreciable land mass you come to, when coming out of the swamps. I do know, that I saw pictures where they used mules and horses to pull the boats up Terrebonne Bayou. They had ropes attached to the paddle boats and the literally pulled the boats filled with supplies up the bayou to deliver their goods. I didn't know this until I went down there.

Never under estimate the ability of man to expand out into hostile territory. We always find a



way to make it work. Adapt or die, eh?



From 1996 to 1997, we got to know Louisiana and its people. I can't say enough good things about either one, I love the State and I love the people. I don't like the justice system nor do I like the mosquitos. Both of those are viscous and need to be avoided at all cost.

I don't think I really discussed it, but my family (and I mean all of us) are campers, hikers, travelers, canoers, etc. We love the outdoors. We could survive Zombie Apocalypse, if we need

to. In southern Louisiana or Mississippi, this is not something to be attempted by the faint of heart or the novice outdoorsman.



There are things out in dat dere bayou, mais - non, should be left alone, laws yes. You got no business tempting da loop-larrue, non? That's what any coonaisse will tell you if you tell him you want to camp south of I-10 in a tent. A lot of people do it in a camper.

But, that's not the same. You're protected like that. And that, by the way, is a Louisianans idea of camping also. They don't know what

it's like to actually get out there. Surprised, I was. But then again, the danger level there is a lot higher!

I lost a 700.00 Doberman the first night we camped out. It was about 2 a.m. and the dog started barking. I didn't hear anything myself but hell, I'm half deaf from jumping out of airplanes anyway. I let the dog out of the tent and it was the last time that ever saw that dog. I heard barking, a splash, and that was it. You can't bark under water. I have to assume that the dog went up the bank and started barking at the alligator, got its' snout grabbed, and pulled into the water. Wham Bam, it'd be over before you knew it. I don't know that it's what happened, but it's the most plausible answer. The dog was gone, campers beware!

We had never ran across fire ants either. These are some mean little devils let me tell you. You have never experienced pain until you've been bitten by a fire ant. It's exactly like the name implies. Where the damn thing bites you, burns like fire, then you will get a blister, but not until it hurts like hell for 5 or 10 minutes. That's one bite. If you step on a pile (a pile is any ground that is softer than the ground around it. It doesn't have to look like an ant pile I found out), then the little

bastards will swarm out by the thousands. You had better move fast! It doesn't take but a couple of seconds for them to ruin your whole day.

What else? Oh yea, it didn't take but a couple of weeks to find out that all of the hazardous waste I sent to Louisiana, was within 30 miles of me on three different sides. That was a little depressing all by itself. Boy, you have to hope those disposal facilities knew what they were doing. I found out later they didn't, but I think that we already discussed that. I don't know, I could use a third eye or 6th finger. Extra appendages don't bother me at all, do they you?

By 1997, I had gotten a job as a terminal manager for TRIMAC Corporation. Even if you don't know it, you've seen their tanker trunks on the highway somewhere. 'They are the largest tanker company in North America. They handle everything that ships by tanker truck. They had a terminal right outside of New Orleans, in Hahnville, to handle the petroleum products coming out of the oil refineries in Belle Chasse, Louisiana. The majority of our loads involved the pickup of loads in New Orleans and shipped them to Houston for the most part. There were

other types of loads of course but that was our milk run.

We were all pretty happy about this time. Clinton was doing the country pretty good and everyone seem to have a little extra MONEY. Just like always something happens that changes things.

This time it was buyout of my terminal to another trucking company. My regional manager just showed up one day and said goodbye. I was surprised but not that surprised. These kinds of immediate dismissals are very common in the trucking industry. Ask any operations or facility manager and they will tell you. Over the years, I went through 4 corporate buyouts where the manager got fired or replaced. They were never assimilated. After all they were the competition, why would you want to rehire them?

Now this didn't affect my drivers at all. They're home terminal just became Houston, instead of Hahnville. That was important because I had a team, Lloyd and Aileen. They preferred to drive team so they could make more money.

They were owner operators for me, so running team meant they had the opportunity to make a lot more money.

The problem was they had a

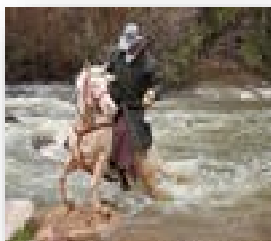


farm. The lived north of Baton Rouge about 10 miles. They had cows, bulls, chickens, horses, and the whole 9 yards.

They couldn't run as a team and leave all of those animals alone. Someone had to feed and take care of them every day. You know how it is when you have animals. They work has to be done. There isn't any putting it off or anything like that. You have chores and the chores need done.

Without income coming in, I knew that my sister Cheyenne would be bitchy to say the least. When Lloyd offered me the job of watching after his place for a while, so they could run doubles, I agreed. It would give me time to think and also time to find another paying job. Both were pretty high priorities.

I loved it up there. It was my first time in years to be able to just sit down and slow down a little bit. There hadn't been many opportunities to lead the slow life, so I took advantage. Can you blame me? Surprisingly, the farmer life appealed to me. Getting up at 5:00 in the morning and feeding the animals, coming back and getting breakfast, etc. Boy, it isn't hard at all to eat up a day doing just little piddly things all day long. It is really amazing.



Feeding animals and the day to day chores were easy. I did have one incident that scared the shit out of me and my brother. If you ever ride

horses in the south, pay attention to this story!

I had been tending to the farm for about 2 months when my brother Kelly came down from Missouri. Kelly has always had a tendency to follow me around. This was just another one of those incidents. We had decided to saddle the horses up and take them for a ride. They hadn't been ridden in a while and they needed to be.

The Pearl River runs from the north to south along the edge of Baton Rouge and then all the way to the Mississippi/Louisiana state line before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. Don't ever assume that the river has a rock bottom. It doesn't. Boy, did we find out it didn't.

It was hot and humid that morning when we went riding. We decided to take the horses and go down to the river to go cat fishing. The plan was to go down with the horses, fish for a couple of hours, and then get back before the normal afternoon showers began.

It sounded like a good plan but the reality of the situation was that the plan sucked. The plan sucked because there is no bottom to the Pearl River

that can support the weight of a horse. We had walked the horses down to the river the then remounted them to go across the river. We started across and the river got deeper quickly.

All of a sudden, the horse just quit moving forward. No matter how much coxing I tried, I couldn't get the horse to move. I don't care what anyone says.....it's not right for me at 5'1 to be able to get off a horse and not step down. It doesn't paint a very pretty picture does it? The horse had sank in the sand. Kelly's horse had did the same thing. We were both able to step off the horses and just stand there. It was the first time in my life (and probably the last) where I was taller than a horse. It was funny as hell to see. Both horses sank up to their bellies because of their weight, but we were light enough to just stand there beside them. It must have made one hell of a picture.



The reality was not as

comical. A horse cost 2,000.00 dollars give or take. We had 4,000.00 dollars' worth of animals stuck in the

sand. Each weighed over a thousand lbs. so we weren't just going to push them out. This problem was made worse because the weakest part of a horse is the ankles. If we tried to pull them out then the chances of breaking a leg were pretty good. Boy, all you plan to do is go out for a little ride, maybe do a little fishing, and what happens.....you might kill your friends horses today.....no big deal.....yea right!

The first novel idea was a rope tied to the bumper of the car and pulling each horse out one at a time. Unfortunately, we couldn't get a car anywhere near that part of the river. That wasn't going to work. Besides if the horse fell over or didn't cooperate, it could break a leg (are you getting the idea we felt like little kids in really big trouble? We did!

We were about a 1/4 mile from the house, and I came up with a cum-along and rope. It was powerful enough to give pull, but it could be controlled so the animal wouldn't be hurt. It could work. Kelly ran back to the house while I kept the horses calm. We came (past tense of "cum" in cum-along), we fought.....we failed. We tried it, but it just couldn't do it. The horse would not budge,

no matter how hard we tried.
There had to be another way.
God, now I was getting
visions of rescue choppers
lifting the horses out with a
media circus, and the whole
nine yards. The situation just
seemed to get worse and
worse and worse.

There was one last thing to
try. It was about as old school
as you can get. We used
shovels. I sent Kelly back
again to the house, he got a
couple of shovels and thru
God's good graces, dug those
suckers out. One at a time, it
took 2 hours per horse.
Never, ever, have I went
horseback riding since then, it
wasn't the horses fault, it was
mine. I'm just preventing me
from making another bad
decision. I think that's
prudent. Needless to say, the
incident scarred me for life.

Chapter 34

Welcome to the Oil Field and the Next 10 Years of My Life



December 24th, 1998.

That was a red letter day for me. It was the day I started a new portion of my life. I didn't plan it, but at the same time I had wanted to do it. *I wanted* to go offshore. Believe me, I know that I wasn't big enough to work on the rig floor. That's super tough work and it takes a pretty big man to work out there. I know I've said in the past "What one man can do another can do" and I did mean that. But, there are practical limits to that expression, eh?

Kelly had been working offshore for about 6 months, with a company called Energy Catering. They were a sleazy little company that provided the catering services for an offshore rig or platform. You see, an oil rig consisted of a lot of different companies and crews working together. Oil rig workers worked out on the rig. Their company doesn't want them to spend their time, cleaning their rooms, doing their laundry, or feeding themselves. They had found out over the years that would lead to disaster. So, instead they hired catering crews to come in and do the cooking and cleaning and laundry for them. That was what Kelly did. He was a "BR Hand". That was the guy that did the laundry and cleaned bedrooms his entire 12 hour shift.

You have to ask yourself,” Why would anyone like to go offshore?” It’s because they are guaranteed 84 hours per week minimum. That’s 40 hours straight time, and 44 hours overtime every week at time and a half. Oh yea, how is that for a motivator? How can that be true? It’s not that



hard really, when you’re offshore you work 12 hours on and 12 hours off 7 days a week. That 12 x 7 is 84. It adds up to a lot of money. Catering got paid the least, and they still cleared 800.00 dollars per week, 10 years ago. I don’t know what the rates are now, but I bet they are more. Shit, come to think of it, that would be the perfect place to write another book. You have all the time in the world with very little of the distraction.

Lloyd and Aileen had been on the road together for 4 months and were ready to

come home. That’s about all a team can be on the road together without a break, before they starting picking at each other, (if you know what I mean). Husband and wife teams are the same way on the road as they are at home. Shrink the area they have to play in and the situation intensifies. Enough said, it was time to move on. An opportunity became available and I took it. I went offshore on Christmas Eve 1998.

There wasn’t a physical, no paperwork, no hiring orientation. They needed



someone to catch the boat in an hour.....Kelly called, I packed and headed for the dock without any idea of the work I was to do or where I was to go, or how long I was to be gone. It was kind of a bizarre hiring situation. It fit me perfectly didn’t it?

Honestly, how difficult could it be? You drill a hole in

the ground, and the oil flows out. They go around drilling holes. I was sure there were variations, but that should be the condensed version. As with all things, that was a real over simplification.

I need to give ya'll a quick lesson to bring you up to speed. OK, the oilfield is broken down into 2 major categories. Drilling – This includes the surveys, exploration, test wells, and everything involved up to the point where the well is ready to “produce” or, starting giving up oil. The other side is “Production”, and it’s just like it sounds. They keep the well flowing and the oil coming, after the drilling is completed.

On paper, rigs and drilling cost money. That’s to be expected. Production only produces or makes money, so they always look great on paper. Each production platform is its own profit center just like every rig is its own profit center, Production makes the money and drilling spends it.



Everyone wants to work “Production”. Everything is a profit and loss center. You either make money or you spend money to make money.

The result of all this is drilling crews are treated good but production crews are treated great. The difference is like night and day. It goes all the way from bedrooms and living spaces, to food. Here, let me give you a few examples:

Category	Production
Drilling	

Bedroom	Individual
bedrooms	4 men to a room normally

Food	Anything they want.
	1.60 per plate guideline food cost per meal

Transportation	
	Helicopter
	Boat or helicopter usually boat up to 10 hr.

It pretty much like that in every category. When you make the money you get fringe benefits, when you spend it, you don't get the "fringe". The drilling rig in the "The Abyss" is a pretty good depiction of a normal drilling rig. They are dirty and muddy and in general like living in a tin can that someone is beating on from the outside. Production are clean platforms with very little mess. All the people do there is maintain equipment. No mess, no fuss,

under general conditions. It's the best of the best.



I explained all if that because my very first job was on a Production platform. That was some real luck. It was a small platform with a crew of about 15. 7 would work during the day and 6 would work at night. The last guy was the "Company Man (the representative of the oil company i.e. Exxon, Shell, etc.).

There are hundreds if not thousands, of production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. There are hundreds of drilling rigs. I didn't know how lucky I was, but I suspected. It was too clean and too easy. I had to clean bedrooms and wash dishes and clean the kitchen after meals for 15 oil workers. You talk about a pud job. This was it. They wanted to pay me 600.00 per week to do this? All my meals and room paid for too? Oh yea. I did the work

great. You know I could clean from my past. They loved me. I wasn't your normal BR hand. What I found out later was that most of the catering people were old drunks and derelicts

that
pretty
much had
nowhere
else to go.



'They would stay offshore, work, come in and spend all of their money drinking or whatever, and go back to the rig, broke and start all over again.

To have someone motivated, and sober, and not a social DERELICT was novel for them. They were treated in a manner they weren't used to. Hell, I even folded back their beds and put candy on their pillows. They got 5 star hotel treatment.



I
went
to the
rig on

Christmas day and I came back to land on April 26th. My first hitch offshore was 16 weeks. I got to shore and the first thing I remember thinking was "How green everything is". You don't see any plants, trees or grass offshore. You really don't appreciate those things, until

they are taken away. I bet submarine crews feel the same way about the sunlight, after being underwater for a while. You always want what you can't have. That's human nature. I know the hour ride back to Houma from Morgan City, I just looked and looked and looked and the trees and grass. They were just awesome. I bet I remember that morning for the rest of my life.

Then there came the second benefit. I got to the office of Energy Catering and I had 16 paychecks at 600.00 per check. Oh yea, I was going to town tonight!

What's the catch? Why isn't everyone doing it? With that kind of money and the work not really that hard, you would think that people would be flocking to the oilfield. They aren't though. Believe me, it's not for everyone.

I'd like to ask a couple of general questions, if I may. First, do you like to go to the store? Do you like to shop? Forget it if you are offshore. There are not any stores to go to in the middle of the ocean. That's the first problem. The isolation. It is identical to jail but the rooms and food are definitely better. You just

don't need bars when the "prisoner" can't escape. That's why drunks and socially unacceptable people are able to deal with it. It's no different than doing 2 or three weeks in city or county jail. There is one problem with this type of personality when working offshore. If they like to fight it won't work out. There is a zero tolerance rule to fighting offshore. They are serious about it too. They have to be after all. What if someone got into a fight or got cut or hurt really badly? It takes anywhere from 15 minutes to 2 hours to get a helicopter to the rig or platform; then, you have to load them and fly them back to the hospital. That doubles your time.....you see how long it could take? Violence has to be identified and weeded out. So, cut a majority of these types of personality.

Another group of people that do well are ex-military. They don't have any problem with the isolation or the discipline required to not go crazy offshore. They take orders well, and they are used to living in a communal type of situation. I didn't mention that above, but people who go to jail are used to this "communal" lifestyle as well.

There are some other little "sticklers" that tend to weed out an additional 20 or 30 percent of potential applicants. Are you the jealous type? Just think how crazy it would drive you, to be offshore 200 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico, and you just "know" that Jody is on his way over to your house, he's going to get naked with your girlfriend.....man, and there is nothing you can do about it. Do you think that would drive you into a rage? Oh yea!

Let's go in the opposite direction. You have a couple of kids. Your wife really loves you and there isn't any doubt at all that she loves you completely. God, you couldn't ask for anything more on the home front. Would you be ready to leave them 6 months out of the year? The normal schedule for offshore is 2 weeks on and 2 weeks off. That means your completely gone 6 months out of the year or 50% of your kids and wife's lives. Birthdays, holidays, those special events like the first football game or concert, all won't matter if you're scheduled to go offshore. Sorry dude, that's the price to be paid. Can you deal with that? Can your family deal with it at the same time? Are you willing to make your wife responsible for the raising of

your kids? Are you willing to throw that responsibility on her? Are you willing to make her do all that extra work?

I wonder how many more people (percentage wise), are eliminated because of that paragraph? There are a thousand mutations and variables of these type of problems. Every single one that you deal with on land, they deal with offshore. The problem is that they have to deal with it by telephone. Military wife's who read this will tell you, "Yea, what's the big deal? My husband has done two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, I deal with that nonsense every day." They would be right. It's identical.

Very, very seldom is it the worker and his problems, wants and needs all by themselves. Usually, it's a whole group around them also. That eliminates almost everyone but a handful. Is this last remaining few, a group of misfits? Probably, no usually is more accurate. I guess it depends on the rig or platform actually. Sometimes you get a group that works together well and sometimes you don't. You never know.

Offshore they have a definite social hierarchy. It's based on your job and who you work

for. Let me explain a little further.

The Company Man - He's the top dog on a rig or platform. He represents the oil company that's paying the bills. When you have control of the purse strings, everyone else bows down. I think that's true no matter what the profession.



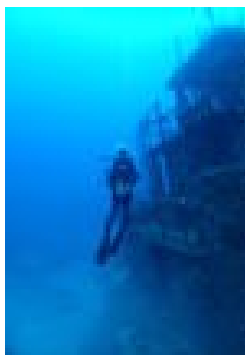


The Tool Pusher - I'm not exactly sure how he got his name, but he doesn't push or move tools around. He's the top dog on a drilling rig. This is no light weight job either. A drilling rig depending on the size, but an average one with a crew of 60 usually operates at a cost of over a million dollars a day. Add onto that the real possibility of disaster every day, and you have a man that usually has nerves of steel and a steely disposition. He has to have. His success or failure usually depends directly on his

The Platform

Foreman/Supervisor - He runs a production platform. He would be a store manager in the normal world. You have to remember though. He's responsible for a great big potential bomb and pollution threat, and he has the lives of all the crew members on his shoulders. So, he's like a super store manager.

ability as a manager and as an oil worker. He also has to be a psychologist, diplomat, and a host of other hats. It's the toughest job in the oilfield.



Company Hands - They are the worker ants. They work for TransOcean, Global, and



Service Hands – I don't even pretend to know how many specialty companies there are that service the oilfield. You have fishing tools, monitoring tool people, people who perforate, who log the hole, people who inject specialty mud. Each one of these is a specialty service doing something in the well hole or above. You have the big companies like Halliburton (who get 4 star service), all the way down to the painters and blasters.

other drilling companies. Usually, their companies treat them poorly compared to other offshore companies.

Catering Hands - Yep, that was me. I was on the lowest end of the totem pole. We earned the least and were respected the least. But working catering had certain advantages. First and foremost, was that we worked inside the living quarters all the time. It doesn't matter what the weather was like outside. A rig operates 24/7. Short of a hurricane, if you're an oil worker you're going to be out there working. It's hot, it's cold, and it's wet or dry. It didn't matter. Catering on the other hand was/is always in the ac or heat whichever the season and we didn't have to deal with Mother Nature, except on crew change days. Another advantage was that we worked on the average of 6 hours per day, even though we were paid for 12. If we got the job done, there was nothing else to do. You can only make a bed so many times in one day, if you know what I mean. Once the meals were done and the place clean, that was it for the day. So yea, we were low man but it had its advantages.

The "Mr. Charlie" is identical to this TLP. You can see it in Morgan City , Louisiana.

If you ever wanted to see a drilling rig, There it is!



Do you remember that when I was hired it was spur of the moment, and that I didn't even have an orientation? It was true. I had the Energy Catering Supervisor Bo Burke, come out to my platform on

an inspection of the catering crew. He especially came out when he found out that I was on this platform for the 4th month, and there hadn't been any complaints from the platform.

The no complaints about the catering crew was what was unusual. Usually, when one of the catering personnel wanted to stay longer, he was wanted by the law, or homeless, or maybe even both. Sometimes they were just hiding out offshore, but the point is, they started to get flaky after too long offshore. When I say flaky, I mean foul tempered, work performance decreases, you know the drill. They aren't happy being there, so their work suffers. That's when it's time to send them in no matter what they say. That was a part of Bo's responsibility, and why he would tour the rigs and platforms. It was his job to identify these potential problems before they became a real problem.

Bo was shocked. The platform was perfect and the customer was thrilled. As far as they were concerned, I could stay forever. I never had to go in. In fact, they made me the permanent BR/Galley hand on the platform. That was unheard of on a first hitch. Bo asked me if I had worked for

another catering company before and I told him, "No, I just did the job the way I would want it done, nothing more and nothing less." He asked me how I felt after 11 weeks out, and I said "I was fine. It was more entertaining than sitting in a jungle and I'm getting paid for it. What did I have to complain about?"

He was just amazed. They did let me do 2 more hitches on that platform but that was it. When they found out my history they moved me up from cook to supervisor in 3 months. I didn't even have a chance to really enjoy all the different platforms.

I stayed with Energy until the summer of 2000. They were just a little company but boy did I get the chance to travel. I was constantly on the road or on a boat or in a helicopter, always going or coming from platforms. Sometimes I cooked and filled in and sometimes I supervised. I was never bored and always doing something different. That was the perfect job at that time.

My language skills give me a real advantage also. Most of Energy's customers were working in the Gulf of Mexico or Central and South America. Spanish was the primary language for overseas. Now when an oil company got a contract in a foreign country

let's say Venezuela, then half of the drilling and half of the catering crews had to be from that country. It was a standard part of the contract.

These guys usually weren't productive but it was an expense the oil companies had to endure. I was a favorite because I spoke fluent Spanish and could translate both for the natives and for the rig. It allowed me the opportunity to travel all over the place. It was too cool.

There were 2 rigs I worked on that were memorable. No change that, there were 5. All four were involved in history in some way. Let me tell you their stories:

The Delta I - This little sucker was made famous by John Wayne in the movie "The oilfield". He played a hard-nosed oil field worker

during the boom days of the 1930's. She was also in real life, the first offshore oil rig that operated in the Gulf of Mexico.

Saying she was an oil rig was being kind. I think my description would be a floating garbage can. It was hands down the worst rig I ever worked. Believe it or not it is still in use today. She is used to plug and abandon old wells that have stopped producing. She is still perfect for this type of job. Because she is so small, she has a very shallow draft and can operate in water as shallow as 3 feet deep.

When you have a rig that small there aren't usually enough beds to go around for everyone on board. No, they don't make you sleep on the floor or with someone else. It's easier than that. They just don't let you sleep at all. Just kidding! They "hotsheet". Just as soon as one guy gets up and gets ready for work, the BR hand comes in and changes the linens on the bed. There is a window of about an hour, between when one shift goes off duty and another shift goes on. This usually coincides with a meal being served. This way, the guy going off duty has a bed to sleep in and clean linens on the bed. So where does the term hot-sheeting come from?

It's used because the bed is still warm when the next body crawls into it. It's kind of a creepy thing at first but you kind of get used to it. If you're a real stickler about your "personal space" or you have a phobia about contact with others, offshore is not the place for you!

The Delta I was the first rig that I experienced what it was like to be sea sick. It sucks badly. Try being nauseous for 12 or 13 hours and still have to cook a meal for 30 guys. It is not my idea of a good time. Honestly on this night, I don't know how those suckers were even able to work. It was amazing to me.

We had a storm come up and we were laying pipe on the ocean floor using a "stinger" of the back of the barge. A stinger is an assembly designed to guide pipe slowly off the barge and into the water. It was shaped just like the stinger on a bee, hence the name.

I don't know, we were in about 8 feet of water moving in a line, adding 10 ft. sections of pipe, weld, move forward 10 foot, weld another piece, you get the idea. When the storm came up the barge started going up and down (at 1 point we had 14 foot waves), and those guide never stopped welding and progressing. I couldn't have done it. I did

have the displeasure of trying to cook with this happening. It wasn't my idea of a good time. I don't recommend it to anybody. Here's one other thing I don't recommend; don't make spaghetti in a storm with big waves. It really looks bad when it comes back up. Its ugly.....that's just a little bit uglier than ugly.

The Cherokee - Global

Industries had a series of offshore work barges, the drilled and laid pipe at the same time. They were all named after Indian Tribes:

- The Cherokee
- The Arapaho
- The Iroquois
- The Apache
- The Comanche

They were all really nice barges to work from a catering point of view. The living quarters and galley were excellent and fairly modern. All of these rigs crewed upwards of 200 while at sea, so we stayed busy.

The Cherokee came to mind first when I was trying to

think of the rigs and barges that I had worked. She was the first big barge I worked and also the first barge that I thought I was going to die on. Here's how that incident went down.

We were working out of Ship Shoal- 218, just south of New Iberia, LA. The barge was supposed to tie into the existing pipeline of an oil platform, and run new pipe all the way to another platform 2 miles away. Most people don't know that one platform may have 10 – 16 wells drilled and each hole is pumping up oil.

We had been on the job 3 or 4 days and everything was going according to schedule. I was cooking the evening meal outside on the pit/grill. This was a huge sucker that the welders had made. It could cook 50 steaks at a time or smoke 15 whole briskets. It must have been a Saturday evening because we always cooked steaks on Saturday night. I remember I was cooking steaks to order and we had a pretty good line of guys waiting to order theirs. I had kind of noticed that the barge had swung around a little bit, but I didn't pay it any mind. Why should I? I was just the cook after all. There wasn't any doubt in my mind that there were over 100 people on board who knew more about it than I did.

Somehow the barge managed to hit one of the pipes that oil is carried thru from the ocean depths up to the production platform. This was a 6 inch pipe and it caused all sorts of hell. You wouldn't think a 6" pipe could jeopardize a craft the size of the Cherokee, but oh yea, it did.

That little 6 inch pipe carried oil at 7,500 pounds per square inch at a flow rate of 200 barrels per hour. That kind of pressure is caused by the weight of all the earth sitting on top of the oil and the weight of the water as well. That's a lot of poundage trying to squeeze the oil out of the ground like you would squeeze a pimple.

When the barge struck it, it started spewing oil all over the corner of the barge, and guess who had an open FLAME going on a charcoal pit? Guess who started to run like hell in the other direction with 50 other guys, all at the same time? It only took about 30 seconds for the vapors to reach the grill. Ka-Boom, The first explosion sent most of us to our knees. After that, the pipe just shot out flame like a flame thrower. The barge was on fire, and needless to say a panic began on the deck.

The emergency systems on the platform shut down that pipe pump, but who cared? We were more worried about us catching fire more and sinking, maybe even having to abandon ship. That is not something you want to do.....ever, when your 100 miles out in the middle of the ocean. Not good.....not g..o.....o.....d!

The captain of the barge pulled away and fire crews were called to the top deck. The managed to get it put out after only a couple of minutes. The damage was pretty minor because the whole barge was made pretty much of steel. Everything operational other than welding was below decks so out of the way of being harmed.

The potential for a spill like the BP spill was there even though we didn't know it at the time. Just another bullet AVOIDED by an oil company. Incidents like the one I just described are not usual by any means but they do occur. It a rough environment no matter how you look at it and when you work in conditions like those offshore, you have to expect it.

The Hercules - This was my favorite of the Global barges. She was the only one not named after an Indian tribe, but that's because she was in a class all by herself. She was a monster. Her displacement was almost the same as that of a WW II aircraft carrier. She had a crane that could lift and entire platform up and place it on the ocean floor. Now think about lifting a platform from a ship. That takes a pretty big ship/barge and a pretty big crane.

Her crane was bigger than those you see at the shipyards. As a matter of fact put that picture in your mind and double it. That was the size of her crane. She crewed 400 normally, put could accommodate up to 600 if needed.

I have a whole chapter just on my trip with her to Venezuela.....so, I'LL CONTINUE ON WITH THE NEXT ONE.



The TransOcean Horizon –

TransOcean is an offshore drilling company just like Global Industries who had all the Indian named barges. Her barges were actually much nicer than “Globals”, as far as the living quarters and kitchens were concerned. I don’t how the differed in drilling capacity. Sorry, that was out of my league.

You remember the Horizon don’t you? I cooked on her 20 or 30 times in the past. She was the barge/rig responsible for the big BP oil spill in 2008. Oh yea, I knew her well Horatiio, she screwed a lot of peoples’ lives when all that went down. I wasn’t on her when she had the accident thank god. Another bullet dodged. I was just lucky I guess.

The Shell Ursa and Shell Ocean Confidence - I

I remember being impressed. I mean, I remember being truly impressed, the first time I was on either one of these Shell Oil Company drilling rigs. Floating cities are the best way to describe them. Each crewed over 700 people and operated in unlimited depths.

They were both TLP Platforms (tension leg platforms). What they would do is get to a location wherever, anchor themselves to the sea bottom using ROV’s then, they would fill the four legs with air. This caused tension to be put on the huge wire ropes holding

her to the sea bottom. She would use a combination of air, and hydraulics to maintain a position on the ocean surface. Using this method, this type of rigs could drill in water 2 miles deep and not move more than 6 inches in 25 foot seas. Pretty impressive huh?

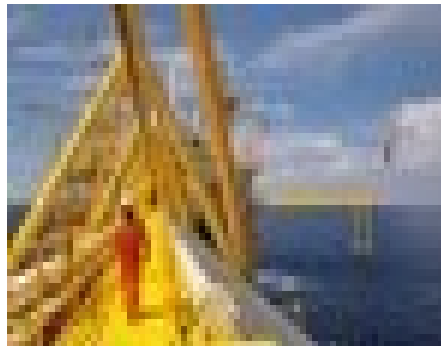
Oh that's not all. Both of these rigs came out of the North Sea and were built to operate comfortably in 40-50 foot seas. The Confidence had 2 huge, 8 story high buildings that housed personnel in one and offices in the other. There were 6 floors of living quarters, a floor just for dining and the two operating kitchens needed for that many people. She had a swimming pool, bowling alley, as well as exercise rooms, saunas, and many other 5 star amenities. Not bad for a bunch of oil field workers. Why would they get treated that well?

I can tell you why. They both have the capacity of drilling and then pumping out 66,000 barrels of oil per day. Let me re-emphasize, that's sixty six thousand barrels of oil per day. That's a lot of cheddar. You definitely wants to keep those boys happy!

Chapter 35

Going to Venezuela

*Seeing
American
Technology vs.
the Rest of the
World*



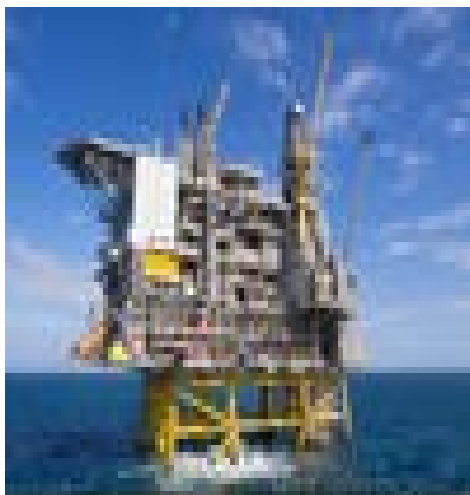
Of all the trips and all the different places I went to while working the oilfield, this was the trip that was the most important. It established me with Shell and the other major oil companies and the food safety and overseas catering guy to have. Doors opened after that, but like always I'm getting ahead of myself.

The Venezuelan State Owned Petro-Chemical company contracted with Shell Oil to provide it with 2 of the first modern production platforms in that country. It was October of 1997 when Energy Catering won the contract to provide the catering for the trip to Maracaibo, Venezuela and back. They were going to use the Hercules to do the platform lifts.

A company out of New Orleans designed the lift slings that would be used, so the Hercules would be leaving from there. Her normal berth was in Lake Charles, Louisiana about 200 miles away. The catering crew would get on in New Orleans, then travel to Venezuela with a skeleton crew until arrival 2 weeks later in Maracaibo. At that point

we would crew up to full strength with a few more Energy hands and the 50%, that the Venezuelans would provide.

I wasn't originally supposed to go. As a supervisor, this wasn't the type of work I would normally do, they wouldn't let me be gone that long. We had cooks and crews who had passports and did this type of job specifically. I wished I could, but I never hoped for it.



matter. Energy had no choice, if a steward didn't leave with



It happened by accident. I mean literally by accident. As the fates would have it, the cook that was originally scheduled to do the job was in a car accident on the way to work. He was hospitalized up in Shreveport and the chances of him being out before the barges departure were slim to none.

Guess who had a passport that was valid? Moi, oh yea, and a full set of current shot records. I was able to travel anywhere and at any time. Chance favors the prepared mind! I won't admit to why I kept all of that current, it doesn't really

the barge, our chances of keeping the contract went out the window. The grudgingly agreed to let me go. I only had 2 hours to prepare to leave for 6 full months.

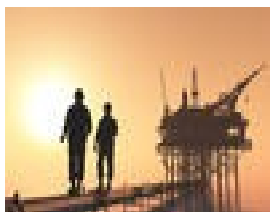


My first priority of course was Stephanie. I called my sister Cheyenne and asked if Stephanie could stay there. She said no problem, Stephanie was always

welcome, no matter how long. Cool that was the first hurdle taken care of, now I had to worry about the logistical problems.

Making arrangements to be gone for 6 months out of the country working, is no easy matter. You have to make arrangements for bills to be paid, your daughter to get the things she needs, get the things you need for the trip, and a myriad of different little sticking points that need to be taken care of. I challenge anyone to pull that off in 2 hours!

I can't describe how badly I wanted to get out of the United States and go someplace, any place, just to feel some part of the world again. I had been stuck here for over 10 years. I think that was the longest I had ever lived in the U.S. in one continuous stretch since I was born. I needed a change of pace, and this was a pretty good chance. There were a couple of storms that made me wonder if we would make

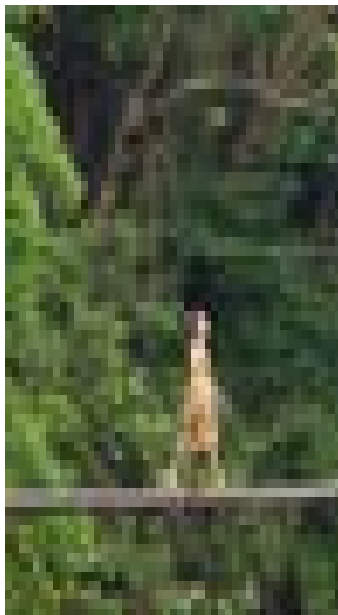
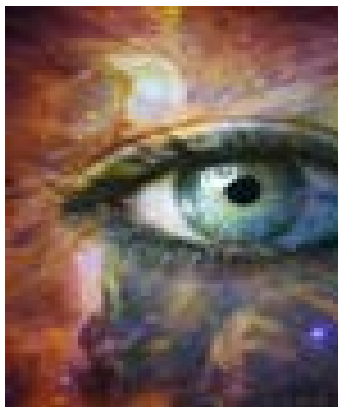


it or not. It didn't seem to concern the tug crew.

I had all sorts of concerns. I mean really, what if the tug rope broke? Or what if an engine broke on the tug? There wasn't a backup for anything. When you're out in the middle of the ocean you would think there would be a backup tug or something, but no, we were on our own.

We traveled down with a skeleton crew of only 10 guys. That made the trip very easy from a catering point of view. I didn't hardly have anything to do most of the day. When you're used to cooking for 300 or better, 15 people doesn't require a dedicated effort. I had so much free time I was bored.

It's easy to talk to God out there in the middle of nowhere. Especially at night, when there are millions of stars shining. It's glorious. No even better, that little bit of the morning just before everyone and everything start to rise. It's a wonderful calm, that only last for a few minutes each day. That's when I feel one with the universe. It still happens today. I greet the sunrise every morning. I normally wake up around 3:00 a.m., but then again I'm in bed by 8:00 (it's what people do at our age). It's going to happen in about an hour, just to let you know.



Pulling into Lake Maracaibo after 15 days at sea was glorious. When we came into the Lake from the ocean you have to go under a very large bridge. It's about the equivalent of the Golden Gate Bridge. Anyway, this bridge was filled with cars and trucks.

You could see that they weren't moving. That was kind of strange to say the least.

We found out later that they were all there to see us. They had never seen a modern production platform, and for them this was a historic event. We understood better once we got further in. Every single oil derrick was just like stepping into the 1900's in east Texas. There were hundreds of these little oil derricks, and here we were coming up next to them with a modern huge, oil platform. Yea, we made the news that night for sure.

We were heroes, we were Americans, and we were there to "make it happen". After all that is what we did as Americans. We made things happen.

What does a modern production platform do anyway? I didn't have a clue before going on this trip and I worked in the oilfield. Do any of you know? There really very simple things. They separate the sand and water out of the oil before it's pumped to land. That is it. That is basically all that they do. Separate the oil, separate the sand, and separate the water, pump the remaining product to land and let someone else worry about it. Pretty simple all in all.

I wish I had taken pictures
of the platforms we set
compared to what they had
there. You could see their
pride when it was all finished.
We did a great job and we all
knew it. But, that was the
technical side. I've still got to
tell you about the personal
side.

Chapter 36

Venezuela – *From a more Personal Perspective!*

“Do as I say and not as I Do” – These are not words that normally inspire, wouldn’t you agree? They taste like shit when you have to eat them, I’m here to tell you. I know, I hate them. They were the jumbo sized, super version. I deserved every bit of what I got back on them too. You will just love this story. Everyone I’ve told it to does. Here we go.

It took 15 days to get to Maracaibo, and I took advantage of every single day to preach to my catering crew about the horrors of South American jails and prisons. I wanted them to understand that they did not want to fuck up under any circumstance if they had the opportunity to go to shore while we were there.

Now there was a standing order from Energy’s office that we were not to go ashore under any circumstance. Do you think that was going to stop me if I got the chance, I don’t think so. I knew what Venezuelan women looked like. There wasn’t any way some bull shit order was going to keep me from my chance if the opportunity arose.

At the same time I was prudent enough to know that

if I got to go, the others were going to want to go also. If not, then they would make sure that the office was told that I went ashore. You know the old adage “What is good for the goose is good for the gander”, I think that it would apply here (I don’t know what a gander is, but I’ll take a gander at guessing if you’d like).

That is where the preaching came in. I spoke Spanish and had traveled a lot. Only one of my 10 catering personnel spoke Spanish and he was native. That left 9 people out of 10 that had the potential to get into trouble. Of those 9, 8 like to drink a lot. There was a lot of potential for trouble.

I preached.....and I preached. Those guys were so sick of hearing about it, that they considered not even going ashore if the opportunity came up. Yea, I was bad. You know me, ever the teacher (or the fool).

When you arrive in a country by boat, car, plane, it really doesn’t matter what you choose as your mode of transportation, Customs is going to be there waiting for you. It’s that way all over the world, not just in the United States.

Venezuelan Customs Agents came aboard for

inspection and approval of the ship and her crew before we were accepted into the country. It's a formality that you can't get around. In this instance the Captain ordered me and the Global Operations Clerk to go thru customs first and then go to shore to get a few supplies and find out about transportation to the airport, hotels, basically, you're domestic requirements. We had plenty of time because they expected Customs to take at least 4-6 hours. This was our first time in the country as a company, and they expected the full inspection.

The clerk's name was "Frog". But, don't get the wrong idea. The man no dumpy frog. He was a big black man about 6'3 and went



about 225 lbs. The reason he was nicknamed frog was because his voice was so deep he sounded like a frog when he spoke single syllable sentences. He basically "croaked".

Anyway, frog and I took a water taxi from the barge to the dock together. From the boat, Maracaibo looked like a fairly modern city and it was.

It had everything from McDonald's to modern department stores and international chains.



I didn't expect to go to a mall and watch a bunch of Latino kids playing ice hockey that's for sure. We asked the taxi driver we hired to bring us somewhere where we could wait on the others to clear customs. So, he brought us to the mall. This mall in Maracaibo was 4 stories tall and it had an ice skating ring in the middle of the third level.



Right next to the hockey rink was a stand up “Caribbean Bar” so we sat down, ordered our first drinks in weeks, and watched a hockey game.” This was not the way I pictured the first day going down but what the hell.

We waited and waited, we waited for 8 hours before we finally got a call from the boat. It was time to go. We had been sitting there drinking forever and when I tried to get up.....oops, I fell flat on my face. When we had been sitting down I really hadn’t noticed that I was drunk but boy the moment I stood up, boom, it hit me like a ton of bricks. That’s a ton of bricks dropped on my head I mean.

Frog picked me up off the floor and dusted me off and got me back to a cab. We had people to go and get.

Sailors, cooks, it doesn’t matter what your profession, after 2 weeks on a boat with a bunch of guys, there’s only 2 things that you really want.....booze and pussy. I apologize to the ladies reading this but that is the way it is. It’s not new news to ya’ll, I know. I wanted to say a church and a phone to call their mother’s, but it wouldn’t exactly ring true would it?

I wasn’t bad while we were sitting in the air conditioning in the mall. As a matter of fact, it wasn’t bad at all. Once we got outside I started to feel worse, but I had to man up. I had a responsibility to the guys after all.

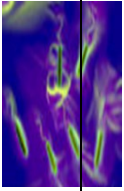
The taxi driver that we used (and continued to use for the next 6 months) picked up our guys at 8:00 that night and then returned to the mall to get us. Finally, the crew was together again and guess where we headed? Yep, the local whore house.

I’ve been in a bunch of sleazy places in my life and this was right up there with the “sleaziest”. It was like 5 or

6 trailers all sitting at right angles from each other. It almost formed a square, and the bathroom was in the far back at the very end.

While the guys were “serviced” for lack of a better or more delicate term, I proceeded to die in the bathroom. I never was a drinker, I would never be a drunk. You can’t be when you try to heave out all your intestines every time you drink. I should have been Named “hugger” the way I was able to hold on to that nasty toilet.

I had a death grip on it.



Go On and Laugh,
I deserved it!

Frog figured out I wasn’t around. He searched the whole place until he found me on the bathroom floor. He picked me up like I was a sack of flour and headed toward the front. I just wish he’d just a little more considerate. What the alcohol didn’t accomplish Frog finished. He

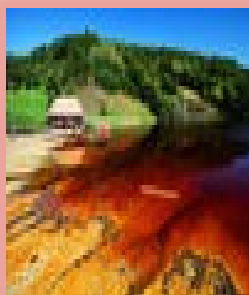
had thrown me up on his shoulder but my stomach was right there making first contact. Every time he took a step, it was a fist right into my stomach. All he heard was me going “ung.....ung.....ung, every frigging step. That set up the back beat. The music was a little more intense. The melody was made by my head. Every right turn my head swung around and hit the door frame, whap.....whap.....whap. Anyone that was in the place heard us coming. It was a ung..ung..whap ,ung....ung....whap...., and by the time we got to the front I was almost knocked unconscious.

They got me back to the water taxi and onto the barge. I don't know how I managed to walk across the barge to the stairs, then going down into the living quarters but I did. That was as far as my abilities took me. I fell down all 26 metal stairs. It was a miracle that I didn't break my neck. I did end up more bruised and black and blue, than I can ever remember being, I not only felt sore but I was one big bruise.

Oh, the ration of shit I got for the next month. I deserved every bit of it. I was the butt of every “don't do that” joke on the barge. It

went on day in and day out. Relentless, but it taught me a valuable lesson. Don't preach to people, you don't have the right, and second, don't instill your values on someone else, again, you don't have the right. It's too easy to and ignore everything else. That's part of what's wrong with Americans today. Oh well, the best learned lessons are those that hurt. Boy did that one hurt!

Why we have the EPA



You'll know why if you ever saw the water of Lake Maracaibo. I would describe the color to you but in had a tendency to change color based on the time of day. During the normal day it would be a really nuclear green, but at night it would change to a phosphorescent purple/green combination.

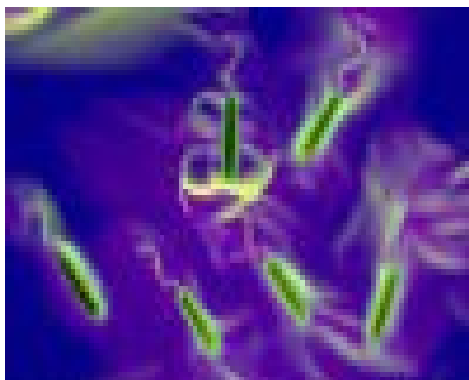
There was no way any living creature could survive in it. It was bizarre. The lake was huge. I don't know how far it was, but you couldn't see the other side. The only thing in the horizon were the hundreds of derricks. We found out there was a reason for it. All of the bubbling and ooze we thought was hazardous chemicals, were hazardous chemicals.

We had an on-board lab for analysis of the production platforms' output. They did an analysis of the lake water and it contained 15-20 % of benzene, toluene, naphtha, and a couple of other hydro-chemicals.

It turned out there was so much oil under the lake that it was literally bubbling to the surface through the lake water. If they wanted to, they could pump up the lake water and separate the hydro-chemicals and probably get enough petro to run every car in the city 24/7. It was amazing that the damn thing just didn't catch fire.

It turned out that this was a concern during the entire operation. We just didn't hear about it. There was a no smoking on deck rule and LEL meters were place throughout the barge to measure explosive fumes that might be present. I reckon that's pretty serious a concern, huh?

I joked about them not having an EPA but even if they did, it wouldn't be able to do something about this situation. This was a natural phenomenon. I bet they will



try in the future. The country

is getting enough petro-dollars
to create a good bureaucracy.
You and I both know that a
bureaucracy loves to spend
money. It's what they do the
best. You know, take it from
you and spend it in a way that
you never would!

After 6 months the work
was completed on time and on
budget. The end result and
watching the sections being
lifted into place were
testaments to the ingenuity of
humans. We can accomplish
whatever we set our minds to
do collectively.

Just like before it took 2
weeks to get home. No
incidents to report. It was just
a normal cruise home. That
was a good thing. It gave me a
chance to rest up before life
dealt me the next hurricane.
That one hit within 5 minutes
of getting to the house. OK,
new chapter...let's go.....

Chapter 37



**Congratulations
Dad.....
You're going
to be a
Grandpa!**

I could still remember me watching Captain Kangaroo and Mr. Green Jeans. Anybody my age knows these two characters to the right. Oops, I mean my other right (ha ha).

How did I go from that, so quickly to going to be a grandfather? OMG, me as paw paw? Wait a minute, hold your horses. Stephanie was only 15 years old. What the hell happened Cheyenne? No....strike that, I know what happened. How did it happen?

What would your reaction be to this news? Scream, rant and rave, maybe EVEN GRAB A GUN AND SHOOT THE SON OF A BITCH!

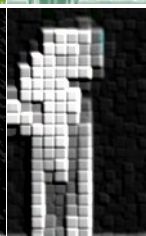
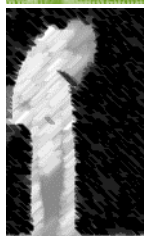
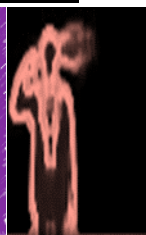
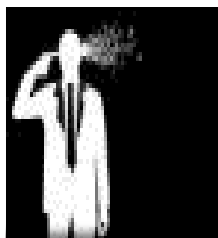
I couldn't do any of those things. How can you get angry 4 months after the fact? There wasn't anything to be gained by it. I knew what it would cost Stephanie, and I saw all of her opportunities in the future dimming away like stars when the sun rises. That was the most depressing thing of all.

As far as her boyfriend Darrell went, I couldn't dislike him. I still like him to this

day. He gave me a wonderful grandson. He's a good kid that works hard and is dedicated. There are a few problems that he has, but I think those for the most part are not his fault, but the fault of his parents and family. We all carry baggage don't we?

Considering everything that the kid went through, it was a miracle in and of itself, that he turned out as normal as he did. You're going to need to know a little of his background and since this chapter is about me becoming a grandpa, you should learn here about him and what lead up to him being a dad.

When he was 2 or 3 years old the poor kid started his cognizant life with his father committing suicide in the front yard. I don't know which year, 1982 or 1983, but it was when the economy was still in the toilet. His dad was unable to find work and stressing about having a new kid and wife. I think he was only 19 or 20 years old. I never did get to know the Foret side of the family, so I can't give you their history. All I tell you is what I was told.



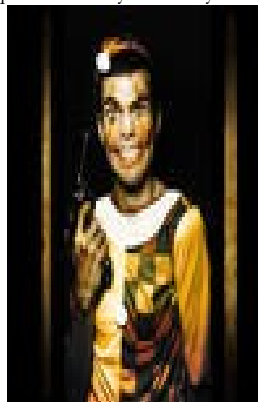


Anyway, he steps out the front door after having an argument with Nancy (Darrell's mother and my daughter's mother-in-law. He goes out the front door and down the trailer steps. He goes into the front yard and puts a shotgun into his mouth and blows the back of his head out. Can you imagine that as a little kid? The trauma that would have to cause would be unbelievable.

I'm sure the same for Nancy, but if you knew her and her family, it isn't a surprise that they didn't all kill themselves a long time ago anyway. They all live within 4 miles of each other and they never go to see each other and they don't talk to each other

unless they absolutely have to. It's dysfunctional in the worst way. They all hate each other and are only truly happy when, they see that one of the others is miserable. Now what kind of nonsense is that? My family is not functional by any means, and we often don't get along. But we don't hate each other or wish misery on each other.

I never did understand the drama and angst thing anyway. What is it about people that require it from you? Why do



they think you have to put up with it? My advice is that when you run across this type of personality you tell them to kiss off and leave your sight and never come back. It doesn't matter who they are or what they offer. It's never worth it in the long run. I'm sure of it! YES, KIM BUSKER, IF YOUR READING THIS I'M TALKING ABOUT YOU!

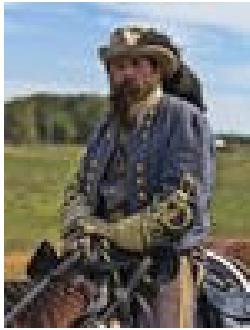
Nancy raised Darrell as a single parent just like I raised Stephanie as a single parent also. He traveled to Florida and lived for a short period, but other than that, he has stayed in Louisiana his entire life. I want to make this perfectly clear "I like him". He's smart and he provided monetarily and economically to his family without fault.

Darrell's problem was love and friendship. Those are qualities he couldn't get from Nancy. She just didn't have it in her. She had three older sisters and a really mean mother. She was the youngest and her dad's favorite. No wonder, she did not have the redhead, big-bone genes of her mothers' family, but was a coonaise, skinny and dark haired, more like the French than the Irish. In her family, it was pretty much her and her dad against the world, (on a nightly basis, I would have

nightmares from the drama that had to have happened).

But there you have it, you have to play with the cards that you're dealt. There are not many "do-overs", if you ever get one you better thank the lord....they are few and far between. It's like a get out of jail free card. It's worth nothing until you need it, boy, but when you do,.....*it's worth its weight in gold!*

Darrell provided great support. By 20 years old he was earning 60K+ a year as a logger and perforator. I'm pretty sure I told you that he was the one that sent the explosives down the hole and detonated it, to open up the hole for oil to flow thru? It was enough for them to marry and get their own apartment right off the bat. Within 3 years they had bought their own house, and within 10 years had it completely paid for. Oh yea, Stephanie also went back and completed high school and got a degree from a university in Louisiana. Nicholls State University Colonels. My daughter the "alumni". She did good!



so you don't see a lot of a single parent. In Darrell's case that wasn't true, Nancy got social security benefits and AFDC. She never had to work until Darrell was grown. She did have some awesome carpentry skills. She had the ability to build a complete house from scratch. I watched her do it later on. As a matter of fact, she built the house that we spent the night in, the night Hurricane Katrina hit us. That was 18 hours of hell, but that's a different story and will have to wait just a little while sorry!

Back to the current story. You have to ADMIRE THEM. They both took responsibility for their actions. They got married, had my grandson, and raised him the best way that they knew how. My congratulations. I am very proud of both of them!

By anyone's' standard he performed that portion of his husbandly responsibilities without fail. Darrell did have a problem with steroids and anger. He's kind of short fused anyway. Now, who wouldn't be if they had to put up with a mother like Nancy, or the rest of his situation, all thru childhood? My daughter will tell you too, that you're parent isn't there, because they have to work to support you,

Chapter 38

You Just Never Know, Do You?

While I worked in the oilfield with Energy I saw things that you would never, ever see on land. There were little things like thousands of Manta Rays migrating south. Their numbers were so vast that they looked like a huge cloud moving under water.

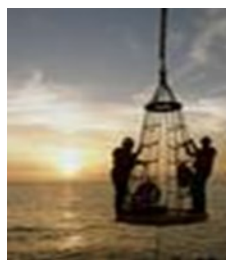
There were other interesting things too. Being struck by lightning on a platform, or the sunrises at sea on top of the helideck before everyone else gets up. Let's not forget the first lift on to a platform in a personnel basket using a crane to raise and lower the basket (that was a real trip).

One story sticks out above all others when it comes to fate or kizmit, or whatever you might want to call it. Are you a good person or a bad person? How do you know? Try putting that thought into words. Not so easy is it? I believe we all know deep down in our individual minds' eye, which way we roll.

We test ourselves as we grow up, lying, and stealing (just little lies and little things being stolen, like candy) and you know if you did right or wrong. The question is how you feel about what you did. I don't care what the right wing extremist or wealthy people say, there are shades of grey in living day to day. Sometimes you're forced to do things you don't like to do or you know are wrong. That's life, we have to roll with the punches.

We test ourselves. We don't need another person to tell us what we live with day in and day out. This story is about a self-test that I didn't know I was taking and passed anyway. Here we go:

May
11,
1998. —
I was
pissed
off that
I was
having
to work
on my



birthday. The office had called and said that they needed a crew brought to Galveston ASAP. They had a

jackup going out to do a plug and abandonment. From Houma, it was 4 hours to Galveston and then 4 hours back. That pretty much screwed my birthday. It sucked but there you go, I just had to deal with it.

You have 2 ways you can get to Galveston Island. You can come out of the north from Houston and drive straight onto the island via a bridge. The other alternative is; if you are coming from the east along the coast, you have to take a ferry across the bay and it lands on the island. This saves about 100 miles of driving all the way around Galveston Bay.

I knew about the ferry before I ever got there. My grandparents used to drive down every winter for a month to fish for flounder when they ran. My older brother and sister went with them a couple of times, but I never got the chance for one reason or another. I always wanted to!

I recognized the name of the town immediately as we

drove thru it. The town was just like granny described it to me. It was just a tiny little place with a post office, gas station, and convenience store. That was just about it. The “constant” population couldn’t have been more than a hundred people.

As we drove west I thought of my grandparents and all their time spent fishing here. It was just a little smile and thought. A pleasant little memory you know? It lasted about 5 seconds and it was back to my driving.





We got to the ferry and waited for cars to unload from the trip east before we could load for the one west. It was pretty good sized ferry. I don't know, it could hold maybe 30 vehicles. For those of you who have never ridden a car ferry, you pull your vehicle where they tell you and you park. Most of the time they have an observation tower/lounge for passengers, and most people go there to wait for the ferry crossing.

You can't have a vehicle running during the crossing, so it's normally the only air conditioned place to sit while the boat is in motion. It's a safety concern. Gasoline engines, oil leaks, you know, that old story.

After riding in a van with 5 other guys and their luggage for 4 hours, we were all ready to get out and stretch our legs. The ferry crossing took about 20 minutes, so there was plenty of time to do it. Everyone got out and left the van. It was so hot outside I left my driver door to the van open, and the passenger side door was open also. The trip went without a hitch. We crossed over without any problems too.

I got the crew to the heliport and they left as scheduled. Just like always, I picked up the trash that the guys left behind. I was picking up a piece of paper in particular and noticed it looked like a check. No way. I had seen enough company checks to know a lease operator check when I saw one. It wasn't really big, only a little over 5,000.00 endorsed,

ready to cash. Could this be for real? If I hadn't recognized the name of the trucking company I would have thought it one of those promotional checks you see. I came within a hair's breadth of throwing it away.

Something told me not to just toss it out. The name and address was of someone back in the little town my grandparents fished at, I thought to myself, I'll just hold onto it and stop at the post office. Maybe the postman will know if the guy exists. It only took 30 seconds out of my time, and my birthday was ruined anyway, hell why not.

Instead of going back the northern route like I normally would I took the ferry back east. It was pretty close to noon when I stopped at the post office. I don't know how it even qualified but it was official. To be honest I've seen port-o-lets that were bigger.

The Postmaster was in, and I showed him the check. By god, he knew the guy. He also was able to confirm that the guy was a truck driver. He'd lived there his entire life and was a grandfather. All in all, the postmaster seemed to like him, it looked like it was his lucky day. I don't know about you, but if I'd lost a check that I had already endorsed for

over 5,000.00 I'd be frantic. No, I think desperate might be a more accurate description.

He told me I could wait next door in the diner (he referred to the convenience store), and gestured over his shoulder at what I thought was just a convenience store. He said that he would try to call the guy and if he could get ahold of him, he'd send him over.

I asked if I could just leave the check, after all I lived 100 miles away still, and I still had to drive all that distance. He told me that he understood, but that he couldn't take it. Once it had been opened he wasn't allowed, due to some sort of postal regulation. He said he'd try to make the call right then. He went into the back and came back just a few seconds later. He told me that he had talked to the guy on the phone and that he was on his way down. He asked if I could wait and I said "Sure".

I told the postmaster to send the guy on over to the convenience store, I was going over to get me a cup of coffee as I waited. I asked the postmaster if he'd like one and he said no. He had a pot in the back already. I nodded my head and left. As I walked over to the store I remember thinking that this was one lucky son of a bitch, he just had 5,000.00 dollars given

back to him after he'd lost it. You talk about good karma, this guy obviously had it. Sure enough, the guy showed up about 15 minutes later.

We sat down and had a cup of coffee together and I told him I was from Missouri. I also told him that my daughter and I had lived here for about 10 years give or take but my grandmother used to come there, to go fishing when the flounder ran.

He laughed and told me that there were a lot of people who came there just for that. This is where it got bizarre, it ended up he knew my grandfather and grandmother. No shit, he knew their first names, they lived in Springfield, and he even knew my sister and brother. Is that freaky or what.

Here I am on my birthday, 1,200 miles from my original home, have a check blow into my van that I just happen to be in that day, on the ferry, at that time.....just to save this guys' check. Yea, he was lucky all right.

I still wonder to this day if it was a test. I passed it for myself. I did the right thing even though I was sorely tempted to do otherwise. I think my granny kept me on the straight and narrow. What do you think? Sounds like a Twilight Zone Episode to me.



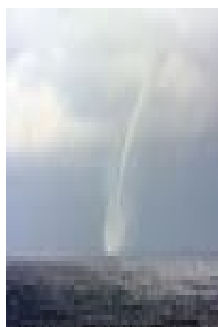
There was one other little incident that was kind of unique. I got the opportunity while working on a dive boat to see the inside of a tornado. You're probably saying to yourself "no way". He's talking a lot of bull now. No, it's true. But, it wasn't all that spectacular. I guess I'm not easily impressed.

We were setting anchors for a TLP offshore about 40 miles, give or take. The weather was pretty clear over



all, but offshore, that can change at any given moment. This time it did. We could see a squall line coming toward us a couple of miles away and it looked pretty bad.

We couldn't move. Normally, a skipper would



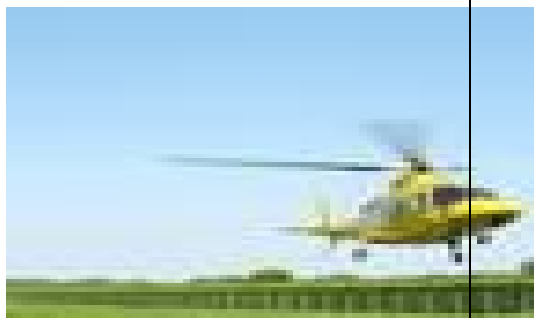
outrun or turn into a squall but with divers in the water, you can't do anything. If you lift anchor or try to run the propellers, you could foul a divers' breathing line and that would be the end of the diver. No, you sat. There were no other options.

It formed less than a quarter a mile away and came straight toward to the boat. Waterspouts are every bit as strong as a regular tornado but they suck up so much water that they die quickly, just from the sheer weight of all that water. It kind of falls back in on itself.

I was watching out the galley door that lead to the rear deck. Everyone had taken cover and all of a sudden

whoosh, we were dead center of it. I turned the boat around twice, in a 360 degree arc (with the anchor still attached). The two divers in the water didn't know what the hell was going on. It had to be pretty unnerving to see your tender boat swing around in the air a couple of times while you're under it. Now that would have been a Kodak moment for sure!

From my point of view it was a wall of water with blue sky straight up the center. I wasn't all that impressed. I guess I should have been thankful that we all didn't die, but no one else seemed too concerned. From talking to the guys later, it's not that uncommon an occurrence out on the water.



There is one other topic I'd like to tell you about, and this didn't involve just Energy, but

that fast and their normal cruising speed is only about 70 miles an hour. Most



my entire time offshore. That topic is offshore transportation. I'd kind of given you a clue to what the workboats were like but I haven't talked about helicopters.

If you don't have a decent company you're working for, or your company is on a shoestring budget, you take a boat. If, on the other hand, you're working for one of the "majors" everything is done by helicopter. I bet I flew 5,000 hours over all. It sounds cool but if you've ever been in one, there so cheaply made, that you can see the ground when the doors are closed through the cracks. They shake and vibrate, and they are not comfortable. They are not

importantly they are not affected by waves. As far as storms went, they pretty much all had radar and flew around the major storm cells.

As you can imagine it's not cheap to run a helicopter. They run on jet fuel which is basically kerosene. Yep, just like you buy for your camping lanterns and cook stoves. It's extremely clean burning and well refined. Bet you didn't know that!

On crew change days, you might have 60 or 70 people participating in a crew change. That is the people that are leaving the rig and then the ones that have to be

transported to the rig to begin their hitches. Depending on the company they might have one maybe 2 helicopters doing the crew changing. If a rig is 100 miles offshore and a round trip took 1 ½ hours and you can carry 12 people each time, how many trips and how long will it take to finish the crew change? Who's good at math? 7 trips should do it maybe eight right? Better add at least one maybe two trips. The helicopter travels on fuel. The amount of fuel they put in it, it based on distance and weight. You don't just fly around with a full tank all the time like in a car. It wouldn't be very cost effective. No they fueled at the beginning of each trip based on their weight/distance computation tables.

Guess what happens when some dumbass does know how much he or his tools weigh, or he is too vain. Oh yea, you run out of gas, and there are not any gas stations 100 miles offshore. Ran out of gas and had to do an emergency landing on the water once, because of that very issue. Talk about a dumbass!



I was involved in one other helicopter crash offshore. It was a true crash as opposed to someone's stupidity. That incident was caused by wind sheer that forced us down and straight into the water right after we took off from the

platform helideck. Everyone that flies offshore must go thru water survival training. This training involves a simulated helicopter crash where the helicopter hits the water and flips upside down. You're strapped in and have to actually exit the aircraft underwater. Most people do it fine but there are those that become completely disorientated. Blacks are often the worst. They seem to be scared of the water more. A guy like that will get you killed. That's why you practice. Experience and training overcome fear. The unknown is the worst fear of all. I suppose that's why most are so afraid of dying. I also suppose that's why I'm not afraid. It looks like another adventure to me. Maybe the best one of all, who

knows.....that's the coolness of it isn't it?

Chapter 39

John Sontheimer and Sontheimer Offshore Catering (SONOCO)

In early 2000 I changed catering companies from Energy to SONOCO. I went over with the expectation of being a supervisor and for a short period of time it was true. Mr. John Sontheimer saw something that others hadn't seen. He forced me to "Bring it to the next level". He was a mentor, an inspiration, and when you hear this story you're going to wish



you had a boss like him. , Please let me tell you a story about a truly great man. A man that I could only hope to aspire to and please. That's right, I said please. He could have been president of the country. It's our loss that he didn't choose that path.

The man was the consummate leader. He inspired you to perform. His method was simple. Tell them what you want, leave them alone to accomplish that goal (you providing support when



needed) set goals and if they are accomplished give them a free hand. This was the most important. Nothing, I repeat nothing, was to be done that was not morally and ethically right (not defensible, but right). There were no grey areas as far as this was concerned. He was the perfect boss for me. All right, on with his story.

Just by coincidence, Mr. John was also from Missouri. He was from Kirksville, a small city down in the boot hill of Missouri. His parents owned a farm and the way he described it, he felt trapped when he was only 16. He lied

about his age and joined the Navy at 17. He enlisted as a cook on a ship, and you must understand that this was during WWII, I would think it would be pretty ballsy to actually volunteer to be inside the belly of one of those steel monsters, in time of war but who knows?

He did his hitch and got out. From what I understand this was right at the end of WWII. So things, were really changing rapidly. The problem for him was that there were over a million men getting out of the armed services at the same time. All these guys would be looking for work too. He didn't have an education and cooks didn't rate real high up there in career opportunities.

He was smart, he told me this and I already knew it to be true "Always pay attention to little details. You may not use them right now, but, everything is cyclical. Those details will be important again in the future. The trick is remembering them when the time comes." Boy, truer words were never spoken.

In his case, it was dive tenders. Yea, he turned a little information he overheard when 2 dive tenders were talking, into a multi-million dollar catering business. Yep, that's also right, he found his nitch using his same skills the Navy taught him as a cook.

These weren't trivial lessons. These were how to get groceries to crews, feed them, and maintain living quarters in a marine environment. Dive tenders and marine environment and food, what do these things have in common and where could you profit from those skills?

He had overheard the dive tenders talking about opportunities down in the Gulf of Mexico, because the oil companies were starting to drill offshore. This was a new frontier. John thought to himself, those guys have to be fed, I know how to do it. I'll go and start my own little cooking business instead of fighting all these other guys trying to find work. Boy, that was the right decision. He tapped a market before it was a market. Way to go Mr. John!

His story was very unique also. I imagine that's one of the things I like about him right off the bat. He had money by the time I met him but you never would have known it. He was that kind of guy. Unlike a lot of people, money didn't make him an asshole or corrupt him. When he got out of the Navy he never went home. He knew what was there and what he could expect. As the old farmers would say "That wasn't a row he wanted to hoe". You've read (in my

mind I used the word
“Listened”, that’s kind of
funny don’t you think?) my
story so you know how that
kind of courage appealed to
me also.

He did it! He made it work.
He moved to the swamps
basically and went from Dive
Boat to Dive Boat and little rig
to little rig, setting up
contracts to provide them with
home cooking and basic
cleaning. He argued that it
was more cost effective for
these little companies to do it
this way. That freed up the
time of their guys to do more
important things. Also he
argued, if they didn’t like a
cook or got tired of him, they
just trade him in on a new
model. That was a pretty
persuasive argument.

By no means was he the
only one. There was a lot of
mom and pop operations that
tried to do the same thing and
failed miserably. Most of
those that failed were from the
area. You’d think that they
would provide a service
(mainly type of cooking) that
these Cajun oil field workers
would like, therefore logically,
they would do better than Mr.
John. They didn’t, and Mr.
John knew exactly why. He
told me about it in private
conversation. He told me that
he never talked about it openly
in bidding wars with his
competitors, nor used it

openly, as a point of
advantage.

You see, Mr.
John was one
generation
before me but
we had the same
ethics instructors
in Missouri.
Basically it
teaches us these
rules

Never do
somethin
g you’re
going to
be
ashamed
of. It
never
works
out, no
matter
what the
reason!

Never do
anything
you can’t
defend
against.
Your
competiti
on will
always
look for a
way to
discredit
you.

Always
treat the
customer
fairly.
Don't
gouge
them if
there is a
problem.
If you
treat them
fairly they
may leave
you for
somethin
g cheaper
but they
will
always be
back. If
you piss a
customer
off, he'll
never
forget,
nor will
he ever
forget to
tell
people
about it.

Always
try to live up to your word.
Sometimes that proves to be
impossible. If you can't
provide what you promised
then compensate the
customer. Not for not
providing a service, you
compensate as a penalty to
you for not keeping your

word. What's a persons' word
worth if there isn't any penalty
for not keeping it? Makes a
lot of sense, that type of
thinking doesn't' it. Too bad
it's not popular any more.
America would be a better
place for sure.

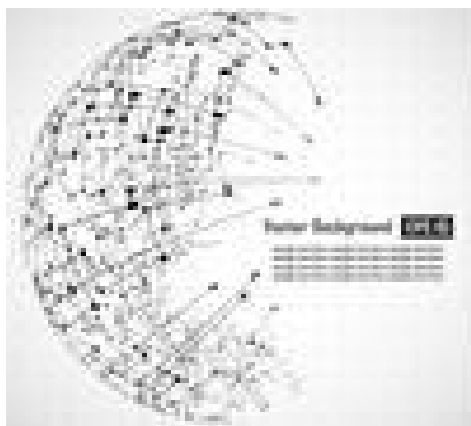
Something I don't
understand is, how can I be so
wrong about so many things
and still be considered smart?
It happens to me all the time.
They say I must know about
marriage because I've been
married 5 times, so they ask
"How do you make it work or
what would you do if...? But
isn't it more logical to say
"after 5 times you obviously
don't know what you're
doing.....better ask for
advice elsewhere."

In this instance I would
have thought that the traits I
just mentioned above would
be sung from the highest
mountain and hammered at a
customer when trying to get a
contract. You know the
routine, politicians use it all
the time; degrade the
opponent so that you look
better. Another way to look
on it is "if everyone else is dull
you look great. Think about
that one....how many smart
people stay with losers and

thugs, or other low lives?
Why? Most of the time it gets them what they want with the least resistance. Those type of people are easy to control. Just ask Jim Jones, Oh yea, but you better consider that blindly following authority doesn't always work out now does it?

You see, Mr. John never even thought that way. Those thoughts never entered his mind. I consider that a character flaw on my part not his. Where I was cynical he was matter of fact about human nature.

KISS.....that's right dumb-ass, "Keep it Simple Stupid".



That's a problem I tend to have, over- analysis, when the simplest answer is more often the truth. He looked at those traits as an advantage. It is not

a bartering chip. You own the moral high ground if you comply. No matter what your competition does they have to rise to where you already are, then maintain it? It almost never happened. "If you use it as a bargaining chip it lost its' value by putting a price on it." That's profound!

The second point was that service was non-negotiable. It would be 100 percent all the time. If you couldn't hang with that you didn't work for him. His prices were the highest in the Gulf of Mexico, but you get what you pay for. If you wanted less service go somewhere else. SONOCO only worked the right way.

How can you argue that?

That is KISS.
Keep those two things in mind and work your butt off. People will try to sell you a load of crap but that's how you keep focus. Simplicity works. We just don't use it enough.



All right now, there's one other little fact I need to relay to you. As you can guess, I've pretty much been a prima donna more or less. I never

considered it to be thru sheer intelligence but thru diligence and perseverance. "Never give up and never surrender".

What people call OCD now, I've always considered an asset? It doesn't allow you to do things half-assed in the first place if you know what I, mean. I think lazy people decided it was an illness. They don't like us working harder than them!

By no means was I the only "find" that Mr. John had made. It would be crazy to think so. He had one other guy that was outstanding in every respect. His name was Mark Hepburn. I really respected him but then grew to despise him. He was given really amazing gifts and he chose to use them poorly. If you're reading this Mark, chasing after the bosses wife and being jealous of me because I had your skills and more, is not the way to go. Use them wisely, it's easy to be an asshole, it's hard to share and help as a team member. He and I could have accomplished so much in furthering offshore catering. As a team we would have been unbeatable. Mr. John knew it, but we could never get Mark to see it. Of course, Mark he never mentioned his attention to Mr. John's wife. I wonder why?

By the time I met Mr. John



he
was
82
years
old
and
still
at
work
every

day. His wife was Ms. Universe quality, both in intelligence and beauty. She married Mr. John for his money and she loved him, but I got the impression that she and Mark had already made plans for the "after", it would be interesting to see if that turned out to be true.

Mark Hepburn is the reason that I left SONOCO, after 4 years of working on projects that I really loved. I mean I loved working for Mr. John more than anything I had ever done in my life. What I produced for him, I had no idea that I was capable of. Some people like being ruled by an iron fist and schedule. These people are not the thinkers. That's a person with the ability to create out of thin air. These are the type of people who create from

nothingness, writes a great novel, creates a great recipe, I think you get the idea.

I'm not that person, at least I don't think I am. I make up for that thru reading 1200 words a minute, with 87% comprehension afterwards at that speed, good study skills, most importantly, I can push the envelope but I am best at manipulating and understanding what someone else has none. We'll call it a unique skill, I have never met anyone else with it. This four year period allowed me to find out a lot about myself and a lot about what others are really capable of. Not what they say they can do, but what they can or can't do.

When you hold them to the fire they fail, then make up excuses why they failed. God, its way too common in the



United States. I'd be embarrassed but they aren't, because they feel like everyone is the same way, they are only bull-shitting too. I love these kinds of encounters, I love to expose them for what they are, leaches and liars for the most part.

Each of these "events" require their own chapters, and probably more. But, we will start with the first one first. That's always the easiest I think.



Chapter 40

*“I want
a Grant
and I
want
you to
get it
for me.*

“

*“That’s your
direction, run
with it.”*

That’s your directions,
how well do you trust in your
abilities? We’re talking sink or
swim here. Would you be
afraid? Could you pull off
something that general?
Here’s a story for you. It’s
one of the points were I *have*
really made a difference.

In 2000 everyone was
making money. The economy
was starting to boom and
people were spending money
like it was free. I didn’t
understand how someone
earning minimum wage, could
buy a house and drive a SUV.
But I wasn’t an economist,
and I paid cash or I didn’t get
it. Credit didn’t really concern
me. This mentality would
come back later and bite a few
million in the ass huh?

Mr. John had been in a
meeting with a lady from the
State of Louisiana, where she
offered to help him get a grant
to pay for training, so that Mr.
John would hire more people
for offshore. The name of the
program was “LA WORKS”
boy, I remember it well.

I don’t know what it is
about the government, but
they always think that the
reason someone isn’t working
is because of a problem.
Everything can be cured with
a little religion and a little
education. Isn’t it just
amazing! Sorry dipshits, *you
guy’s only think your
gods.....I am one!* All right,
all right, I’m getting back to
it.....

Mr. John was interested
but I kind of got the feeling
that this was more exploratory,
than really expecting results. If

it had rated higher I think, he would have given the task to Mark. As it was, I was given a direction and told to find out what I could. I was to report back to Mr. John in 2 weeks, after I found out if the program could help cover our initial training cost.

Lord, I didn't even know where to begin. That was the beauty and the challenge of it. That for me is what would make it great. It was a challenge, and I love a challenge. But this was different in a major way. I wasn't robotically going to follow, what someone already had done. I was going to be the creator this time.

I'm going to admit that my vanity got involved a little here as well. Yes, I wanted to prove to Mr. John, that Mark Hepburn wasn't all that, and you know I believe that what one man can do another can do, and I was tired of his "I'm superior" attitude that was becoming more and more prevalent. I mean come on guy yes, you are smart, but you were just an armorer in the Navy. Nobody elected you pope for god's sake.

I really wanted Mr. John to know that he could have the same level of work from

someone without the attitude (and without trying to bone his wife). The man deserved that respect. I felt he deserved it. So there was my motivation and self-challenge. I didn't know where it would lead or if I could pull it off. The funny thing is, I never even considered failing. It never even crossed my mind. Weird, huh?

The LA WORKS Program was created after the rules and regulations were written. Reading them and understanding them seemed like a good place to start. So that's what I did. I read for 2 weeks. I read every Federal, then State law and regulation regarding the program. Just like I was taught in the Army I answered the 6 interrogatives:

Who
What
Where
Why
When
How

It wasn't hard once I got rolling. Who is the program written for and is there a criteria? What was the program designed to accomplish? Here the goals were pretty well defined. All we had to do was write a

program that met those goals or exceeded them.

The Who of course would have to be the students we wanted to train. According to the program we could train existing employees, or more accurately, update their safety training, thus “increasing their retention in the work force” and avoiding the unemployment rolls (the ultimate goal of the State Program!). The other 70% of “the Who” would be new employees. And that’s where Mr. John, and every other offshore company, were spending a fortune without a return. Spending 750.00 per person to get their offshore safety training (which was becoming more and more required by the big oil companies (i.e. insurance/liability issues Thanks Morris Bart), and then the person quit after working one day or a week because they don’t like offshore or just can’t hang with the program, it was getting very expensive.

A program like this would be a win/win situation for Mr. John. If it worked, he got a better trained employee going offshore, thus increasing retention he hoped, plus if they didn’t stay and it didn’t affect his loss numbers, no problem. The majority of outside cost (i.e. safety training) wouldn’t be borne by

him, but by the state. No problem go for it. We’ll hire as many qualified people as the state could provide. We provided all the training! That took care of “*the who*.”

The What became self-evident? This was going to be a state grant program so there had to be identifiable goals. You can’t expect the state to just give you money without you telling them exactly, how it was going to be spent. More than that though, they wanted a result for their dollars. I thought that was a little unfair since the Congress had been spending trillions without showing any results. We just needed a few hundred thousand. Is that too much to ask for? No matter, we would comply. We wanted to train people to be qualified, to work offshore.

Offshore is a very hazardous environment to work in. Harsh would be an understatement. You’re isolated in the middle of the ocean. Accidents occur frequently, hospitalization is a long way off, and training was the only protection for all the companies that worked in that environment. Let’s face it, if the rig catches fire and you go in the water 100 miles offshore, what you do. Heard the term sink or swim? It applies here for sure!

Water Survival, Helicopter Crash Simulations, Treading water for 3 hours, Rig Safety, Chemical Safety, Fall Protection, and other training. All in all, it added up to 60 hours of training per person *before* going offshore.

Each “module” could have a criteria and a test for proficiency, and all modules could be written based on OSHA guidelines. Things were shaping up pretty nicely.

What would be a better place to train than on a rig? A no bars, no simulation, rig. Oh yea, even better if it could be worked out, we had the rig museum Mr. Charlie sitting docked in Morgan City, LA. She was bought by Virgil Grissom and turned into a museum after she was retired from the Gulf. The Mr.Charlie was the first offshore “floating” Platform. She played her part in history



The Where was a little problematic. It turned out to be the most creative SOLUTION and one that I was proud of along with its owner Virgil.

and was now a 5.00 per person museum for people to tour. If we could convert her, isolate the people with a fence, we could simulate the isolation of offshore, and weed out potential problem children before they were exposed to our customers.

Even though she was retired. She had everything needed to simulate offshore and she was just like many of the rigs used by the smaller service companies like Pride Offshore. The where didn't begin here, but was originally going to be in classrooms. Once we found out about the Mr. Charlie, a classroom just wasn't adequate anymore. What we needed was the "Charlie", I had to get it!

The Why was obvious. For the state it was to make their unemployment rolls look better, and for Mr. John it was to save 400,000 in training over the next year. The why of the two players were their already. I just had to tailor the program to meet their expectations. No problem. This could be done!

The When was as soon as possible. But this was a state program. It would want a beginning and an ending date. All state programs did. They would want to stop and identify if the criteria were met. Think of it as a pilot before they do the entire show. In Louisiana, you had better set starts and stops when it comes to handing out money if you know what I

mean. We also had a semi-deadline as far as the program was concerned. The problem was, that you never knew how long a state program like this would be funded. It could end tomorrow for all we knew. Get a piece of the pie while the pie is available. This put time a time constraint on me. Mr. John would not be happy if he spent a lot of time and money on me and then the program end before a single person was trained. I took care of that puppy by having the grant cover the program implementation and development cost. Problem solved, I would be on the state payroll in a matter of speaking. Mr. John really liked that one!

The How was going to be the hardest to do. The rest of it was pretty obvious from the regulations. I could answer all of those questions. The "How" I had to develop from scratch. This is where my skill came into play. Everything that was going to be trained was already being trained. Those lesson plans were available in one form or another. The training that was needed just had to be consolidated, revamped, and put as I would like to say "under intelligent control".

If you remember the Army gave me a similar task in re-writing the Psychological

Operations Criteria and Training for its PSYOP Course 96F). Many of the things I learned from that, would still apply. Go/No Go training is something anyone and everyone knows about, if you've served in the military. I would base each module on this model. It was proven to work for "less than average" individuals. It would work for catering hands. Their level of education and socio-economic status were almost identical.

So, even though I didn't know for sure I could do it, so many little things from my past, were employed to go above and beyond what I had done in the past. Did I realize it then? Hell no, of course not. Hind sight is 20/20, not the present or the future.

What I just gave to you was exactly the way that I presented it to Mr. John and Mark Hepburn in a private meeting in July of 2000 after studying the problem for 2 weeks. For some reason Mark seemed pessimistic, Mr. John however, liked the presentation and told me to continue. He wanted once a week reports, but other than that I was "Special Projects Manager" and I reported only to Mr. John. Everyone else was hands off. He gave me 6

months to complete the entire program from development to getting approval and starting the first class. The clock was ticking,

Mark's official title was Assistant to the President. His job was just what it implied. Like Mr. John was now directing me, he worked directly for Mr. John doing whatever he wanted. I was being elevated in status, not based on kissing ass, but on production and potentially saving Mr. John, hundreds of thousands of dollars. ***"Who's the bitch now...Mark"***, no not really, but he sure gave me the evil eye whenever Mr. John told him "hands off".

You see, Marks' favorite tactic was to send supervisors or stewards offshore for whatever reason, usually to the most distant and pathetic rigs we had if he was displeased with you. You would be directed to clean up a mess that you didn't have anything to do with. Once you accomplished that he would send you on and on....it would never end. You would get frustrated and end up quitting. He had control and he used it. Unfortunately, not in the way that you are supposed to. You know sometimes you're the fly, and sometimes you're the windshield. I hope it comes

around Mark. You reap what you sow, remember that. The most terrible thing is he has everything, good looks (Italian heritage I bet), intelligence, training, and ability. Why go after the bosses wife or be petty? Why create drama and angst? I DON'T KNOW (but it sure gets around doesn't it)!

I had until the end of December 2000 to pull it all together. I didn't even have to come to the office. I worked at home the majority of the time. I could have done it in the office but I went straight to the information. I went to the state offices and state library in Baton Rouge, I also met with Virgil and I went onto the rig to develop much of the training. Better to walk it thru eh?

It went beyond anyone's expectations, even mine. I covered so much the program even included language training in Spanish for supervisors and cooks, as well as Hispanic workers. I translated every module into Spanish and *provided* "**Rosetta Stone**" as the language module.

They had to cook and clean for each other and live on the rig without stepping foot off of the rig, once the training was initiated. It had three different types of training for the three jobs catering had offshore. One group was to learn how to clean and do laundry, another was to learn to be a cooks helper or "galley hand" as its' known offshore, and finally night cooks and Stewards. Every job involved hands on "doing it" training. You can't get any better.

We were able to pull it off Virgil and me. He and I worked well as a team. He did what I couldn't do. I'm the cold analytical, attention to detail. Don't get me wrong, that's only a tendency on paper. In real life I think I'm pretty animated. I love to teach and if Dr. Heinlein, Mr. Alf, or Ms. Cummings had anything to do with it or influenced it, I am reasonably good at it. I sure hope so!

Let's discuss Virgil for a couple of moments, he's a unique individual and a character to say the least. Oh, I wish he had just 10 minutes with each of you. You couldn't help but like him. He was a "special", he was. I can give you a picture or point of reference. Kurt Russell starred in a movie called "Big Trouble in Little China". In

one of the scenes, he tries to look like a cheap salesman to get into a whorehouse. The outfit, the glasses, the sleazy demeanor, were all perfect for Virgil.

Like I told you before, He bought the Mr. Charlie for next to nothing, but getting the rig set up and turning into something profitable was proving more than Virgil's "tongue" could produce. I always suspected he was right on the edge of failing, even though he never showed it. His desperation and need of me were pretty obvious. That's all right, I didn't mind. I kind of liked him. I was willing to give him a hand. You know, people like that usually can't push the paper or finish the mundane details that are required to complete a task. That's why we worked well. I was desperate to perform and he was too. We were both motivated.

Chapter 41

September 11, 2001 – A Date that will live in Infamy

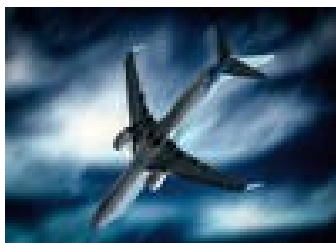


Things were on a roll and I was at the top of my game. I couldn't see the limit of how far I could advance.....then it happened. America was attacked. I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing that morning.

I was right in the middle of restoring a 1975 MG Midget. It was my third restoration,

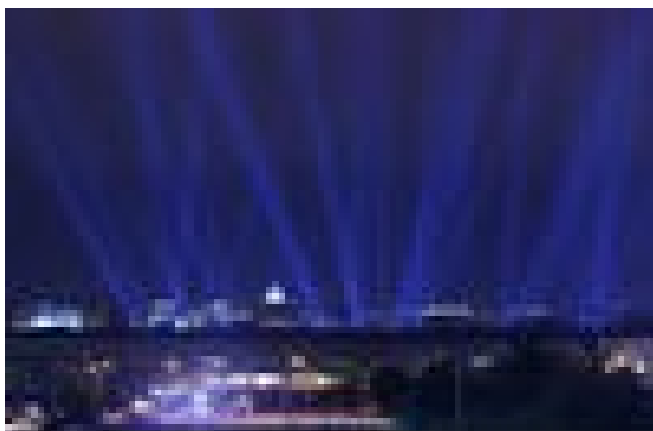
but the first where I actually had the money to buy all the restoration parts brand new. The car had just gotten painted and was out of the paint shop the night before. On the morning of 9/11, I was outside in the parking lot of the apartment complex I lived in. I was admiring the work. It was awesome. I was so proud.

It was early, I was working from home technically, but outside at the moment. My neighbor who lived above me and told me a plane crashed into one of the twin towers. I continue putting on a tail light and a few minutes later she ran outside and told me another plane hit the tower. Two planes I questioned? She wasn't the brightest tool in the shed, she probably got it wrong, and it was the same incident, right?



I had that one wrong too. It changed everything and we didn't even know it at the time. America was lost at that moment. We just don't know that the terrorist won. You don't see it do you. When they were able to force us to militarize our nation and create a "Homeland Security" force, we put ourselves in jail in more ways than one. How do you like getting a taste of what we have been feeding to the world, under a bunch of different pretenses? It sucks,

you force them to retaliate against their own people by doing some simple act that demands a response. The next level up is the government responds with force. The people respond with even more demonstrations or acts against the outrages of some troops or police. The government responds in even greater force, escalating it and trying to stop it at the same time. The people respond with greater violence.



that's why they don't like us. You don't get hatred, you earn it, just like respect, and didn't your daddy teach you that?

What the terrorist have done, was incorporate a tactic we used to destabilize governments in third world countries. It worked for us and now it's working for them. It's one that anyone in Special Forces is familiar with. You see you go into a country and

All of this from one well planned act. It's designed to separate and alienate the government from the people. It works. Terrorists and freedom fighters have used it. Everyone knows but no one talks about it. It serves our governments purpose to have an "enemy" every fascist government has risen to its highest power, on the backs of a "supposed enemy".

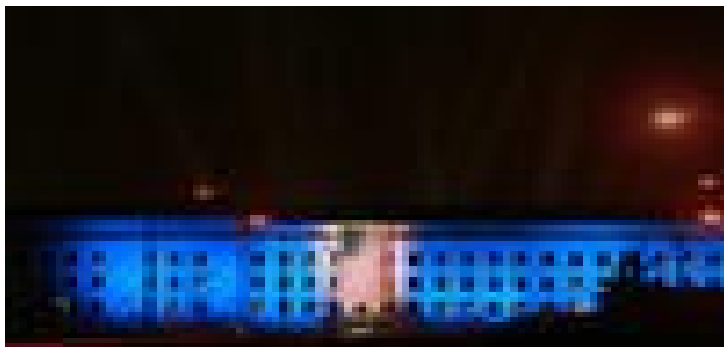
Really, let's keep this in context and truth be told. I worked my ass off last night to be at this point on 9/11/2013. That is today I swear to god. Exactly 12 years to the day since this incident occurred. The trillions that we have spent to defend ourselves are trillions not spent on the economy or on our social or transportation or infrastructure. The people respond with hatred because we're spending on defending others and not feeding our own needy or stimulating our economy. I see a wedge building. Do you honestly think they lost? Oh no, they won. They knew it before they ever drove the first plane into the Twin Towers. I say again, we as Americans are just too stupid to realize it.

All of the above is hindsight and I didn't see it or know it back then. I do remember what my thought was. I thought "Well America, welcome to what the rest of the world has been dealing with for 40 years. Most of the time we cause it, by arming insurgents or supporting fascist. You know the saying, and I'll say it again "you reap what you sow!" Yes. It was only a matter of time, I'm ashamed of our government, but we deserved it, we as a people allowed our

government to do or cause these same things overseas, countless times. They'll deny it, but as far as I'm concerned it's the truth, *and I've seen it firsthand.*

Remember what I mentioned at the beginning, why should our kids be proud to be an American? There's another layer to the onion, huh. You reap what you sow!

We're hated by most of the world now. A really big change in 30 years to go from the most beloved nation on earth to one of the most despised. Why? You reap what you sow!



*The saddest thing is we've been busy
farmers. Really busy farmers.
What I'm scarred of is, we will be
reaping what we've sown as a
nation, for the next 30 years. It's
not a pleasant picture. No, it's not
at all.*

Chapter 42

Continuing the work at SONOCO and the Grant Program

All right, I could spend the next hundred pages going into the details of that project, but I promise I'll make it a little shorter. Everything was accomplished as far as the initial grant went. We were approved for 690,000.00 for the first 1 year period. After that depending on the program and the results, it could be continued.

Mr. John was impressed. He had been given much more than he had ever hoped. It didn't cost him a dime in research or development. I had made sure that my salary was covered in the grant. He was so impressed he gave me a 1998 New Yorker (one of his personal cars) for ten dollars. He couldn't just give it away but he could sell it. Do you think he appreciated the job I did for him?

One half of the training was safety oriented, but the other half was something no catering company had tried before. Train the cook applicants to cook for offshore. This wasn't an easy task. An offshore cook is a real cook from olden days. He has to make breads and pastry, cook everything from scratch and be able to cook well enough to feed a large group of people without them getting sick or bitching about it. That is not an easy chore. You see, most of the applicants that we got were not actual cooks but what I considered fry cooks or Steak cooks, you get the idea. They just knew how to do one or two things. If Mr. John wanted to increase their retention, proper training, motivation, and pay were the key.

I was able to into the additional training but that left me with one other problem. Who is going to train them to cook? Second what do you train? I did what I do...I read every book I could find on food safety and enlisted the help of the National Restaurant Association. I took their national food safety test/course **ServSafe** and scored a perfect score. I became an instructor and a proctor able to give the National Test for **ServSafe**. Mr. John needed a food safety

expert, now he had one. Even better, we were able to train and certify our cooks and galley hands. They were “bonifide”. How’s that for giving the man what he wants.

I took it one step further. I became a certified food safety instructor for the Louisiana Technical College System. This certification and cooperation were needed as part of the LA WORKS System. You see, when the State read our program they requested that we expand food safety training once a week at the local technical college. I liked it and it was an additional feather in SONOCO’s hat.

Looking back we had achieved so much so fast. The plus was it was all done legitimately and legally, and honorably. Boy that was a change of pace. I can’t express how happy I was.

I had almost single handed made SONOCO the leading food safety expert and caterer in the Gulf of Mexico. Mr. John being the business man that he was, offered me a new position. This one, it was doozy. He wanted to bid out my services to other offshore companies that did their own catering. Oil Companies, rigs, boats, it didn’t matter. I was to go in and audit a facility for food safety compliance,

recommend changes if they were needed, and do ServSafe Training for their cooks or people cooking if the company wanted to pay the price. I was moving into a newly created food safety consultant. Too Cool.

My biggest feather ever, was that Shell Oil of North America, asked for me by name, to audit all of their production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. Catering was provided on big platforms and rigs but on small 3-10 man platforms the guys cooked for themselves.

Ever body was becoming more and more conscience of food safety and its potential liability, if an outbreak of food poisoning occurred (we made sure of that!). But, to be requested by a “major” as an expert was something I didn’t take lightly. They were paying for a service and we were going to provide it in a professional manner unheard of in the past.

It took three months of trips to platforms. I completed 27 in all. Some were fine and others were beyond scary. I found canned foods dating back to the 1960’s in some of the store rooms. 40 years is a little long. I threw away so much, but I did make all of the fish happy. It all went overboard.

Shell got their reports, they
were satisfied, and I do believe
things actually did improve.
We set the bar just a little
higher for the others to follow.
That's the place to be let me
tell you!

Chapter 43

“Let’s try something new. I want a meat cutting facility”!



Mr. John had an asset and he knew it now. He set the goals of the company a little higher. Mark, in the



meantime, didn’t like becoming second fiddle. I didn’t care one way or another. When I focus, I focus. I never cared about

politics or being the most important, those things were not then, nor are they important now.

I was the well trained dog. All I wanted to do was perform. I wanted to work and do the job better than anyone else.



Why are people pissed off when you do that? Mark sure was. I didn’t care about showing him up all I wanted was to do the work. That kind of jealousy and attitude goes all the way back to Cain and Abel. I guess you only need two humans to get something like that started.

Not the kind of Butcher you want to see offshore, eh?

Mr. John figured hell, why stop there. If they were on a roll why not continue with it. Our two biggest cost were training and meat. Cost per plate, labor, transportation, all were manageable, but meat was skyrocketing in price.

We didn't order retail anything. SONOCO had an impressive three warehouse grocery facility. It was very impressive for a catering company. Our beef came in large slabs from BP just like any grocer. Even getting meat in bulk and fairly unprocessed, it represented over 15% of our food cost and was rising monthly. What's the solution? Get the whole damn cow. That's what the man said "By god if McDonalds can do it, I can do. I'll go straight over to Texas and by all the beef on the hoof I want and I'll cut it myself to send offshore. Screw these meat processors."

God, I just loved the way that man thought. "They think they have me over a barrel, screw 'em. I don't have problems, I only have solutions!" Isn't that great. It's never give up and never surrender. It's what made (past tense) America Great! I was 100% on board to serve the man. "Give me my marching order, Sir!" I got it. I had the same criteria as before.

Give me something nobody has ever tried before. No problem, I did that at WMI Medical Waste.

I want to bring in full trailers of beef half's and cut them down to primal cuts. No problem, ("what's a primal cut?").

I want to be able to transport across state lines for delivery to our jobs in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. No problem, Now, I need to look at transporting Food Products as a grocery hauler

(Somehow I just became the Director of Transportation and didn't even know it.).

I walked out of that meeting thinking, "I don't know anything about cutting meat. The closet I came was, there was a small meat cutting plant in Ash Grove, just down the street when I was a kid. I used to go down there and watch them butcher cows and pigs. I'd bring our collie down there and get a big bone, a really big bone!. This was just a little different.

Where do I start? Where I always did of course. I spent the first week reading every state and federal regulation governing the processing, handling, and transportation of meat products in the United States.

My god, there were a lot of them. Education, proper handling procedures, certifications, inspections, processing, holding, sanitation, record keeping, were just some of the areas we had to develop a program for. "HACCP" is

their golden ACRONYM. It stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. That sounds impressive doesn't it? The concept is so simple. What it means in layman terms is you identify areas of the process where problems such as contamination can occur and you identify what you're going to do to prevent it. Isn't that much easier to understand?

I took me an additional 3 months to completely develop the program. It ended up being two large binders long, and over 600 pages of processes and training. It covered everything I could think of. I presented it to Mr. John and I even put a bow on the binders. When he saw them he laughed and laughed.

USDA had inspection jurisdiction over all meat cutting facilities in the US. They permitted and the State would rubber stamp it, then the state inspectors, actually do the inspections.

The USDA response **was unexpected**. We received their response in just 24 hours by phone. You won't believe this. It had never happened before and probably will never happen again. They found no errors in the program at all. Zero! They approved everything in the plan in less

than 24 hours. Now you tell me, how many government agencies have ever done something like that? It's unheard of in my experience.

It went a little farther. They offered me a position when they found out that I had created, typed, and developed the presentation, all alone. No help from anyone. This was a professional presentation, and it had a quality they received from professional consulting firms. How did I do it? Simple, I told the regional director of USDA "I had a boss that supported me and allowed me to run. No, that's not quite right, he allowed me to gallup". I told him. He understood when I told him I wouldn't leave Mr. John.

Mr. John got his meat cutting facility in 6 months. Construction was completed in less than a year. Things were really rolling at SONOCO!

Chapter 44

Mr. Glassford



– Special Projects Manager, Director of Transportation

At the very beginning of all of these projects, I warned Mr. John very specifically that if you take government money expect government scrutiny, and he could expect attention, where he didn't get it before.

It happened. Just like I predicted, the first of many audits occurred. The first was

a simple form letter SONOCO received one Monday morning. It was one page and said the following: "Hi, we are the United States Department of Transportation. It has come to our attention that you operate 6 trucks in 4 states. We understand you have never been audited. Shame on us. We will be there next week to conduct a full audit. Help us help you and have all your records ready, Thanks!"

Mr. John called me into his office and handed me the letter. He wanted to know what we needed to do, and if I had any experience with Driver Logs and DOT regulations. I told him about my experience as a dispatcher, Operations Manager, and Terminal Manager of a trucking company.

"Good enough" he said. "You're my man. Make sure we're in compliance." I'm sure he thought see, no problem. Move on to the next issue. He dismissed me and he and Mark went back to whatever they were talking about. I turned around and left.

The drivers were controlled by the warehouse Director and the Safety Director Wayne Holmes. Wayne was a really nice guy,

and the best way I can describe him was your very Irish gym coach or football coach.

He knew industrial safety but he didn't know anything about DOT and Drivers. The whole company had been operating drivers and trucks over the road for 10 years without any knowledge or compliance with the laws and regulations.

My first audit was ghastly. It was so bad I didn't want to bring it to Mr. John. I found over 760 log violations, no safety training what so ever, no log keeping (where each driver had to keep logs for 6 months), to record of driven miles, no maintenance records, nothing the DOT would inspect in an audit.

SONOCO was screwed. This would basically shut down their grocery warehouse operations, and seriously affect the stability of the company.



That's what I had to go and report to the man. It was not

going to go well. Who was going to get the blame? It damn sure wasn't going to be me. Unfortunately, I knew before I walked in there, who was going to have to fix this mess. It was going to be me.

Here's the rub and it wasn't a good rub. In order to comply Mr. John would have to condone or turn his head to illegal acts needed to recreate paperwork and records. The trucks had not been run illegally by any means. That wasn't what I was implying for Mr. John. I had to make that clear to him. No, the problem was it was illegal to create records where none existed before.

Bending the rules is one thing, but knowingly breaking them another. I honestly don't believe Mr. John ever broke a law in his life, he was that type of man. I did the best thing I could in this circumstance. I offered him isolation. The man had done so much for me, it was the least I could do for him. I went to him with this proposal:

"I'll fix the problems, there are over 1600 known violations. I expect fines to equal in excess of 50K and the shutdown of your trucking operations for 2 weeks, in order for your driver hours to reset and training be completed. When they come

next week, I can put you into complete compliance. But only under the following terms. You don't ask how, and you don't ask what. Do you accept?" He told me that he did and did not ask another question.

the company representative down, and tell you what the findings are in general. They won't give you specifics. Those come in the written report. Here it was, I was ready for the worst.....
.....

It was a real let down. We passed. We passed all areas. We would receive a written report in a few weeks.

In one week just like they promised, 2 of them showed up. They were there for a full week audit. Can you imagine? Since it was a "first audit" they were going to do a full audit of equipment, physicals, driver's hours, and records, and finally training.

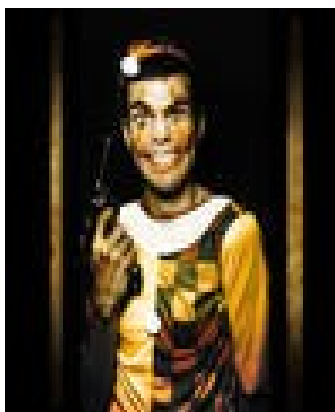
A trucking company is required to keep these records up to date for 6 months. I have to admit, they were very professional and very, very thorough. They come with lap-tops and spreadsheets and input all the data themselves, then they have a program that looks for discrepancies.

Each day everyone sweated, and each day they took one area at a time. By the time Friday came around, I probably weighed 10 lbs. less. At the end of an audit they sit

Party on Garth, party on Wayne. Hell, I was going to become a Tribal Chief before it all was over with. I was unstoppable. We got the result back and there were zero discrepancies in all areas. We received a perfect score from DOT. How's that for crisis management. It doesn't get any better, not from anyone, anywhere.

Chapter 45

**“But
everything is
wonderful, isn’t
it?”**



My time at SONOCO was invaluable. I was totally happy there except for one thing. A constant struggle with Mark Hepburn. One of the things I don’t think I ever talked about, was how much arguing and backstabbing and drama in general bother me. For my own sanity, I have a “no drama” rule in my home. All my friends love it. They always tell me that my house is “sanctuary”. It’s always calm and there is never any stress.

That only happens because I don’t allow it. I refuse to. It eats at me physically. Hell, I told you I had an ulcer at 13 years old. I will never go back there, ever, not for anyone.

The decision to leave was not made lightly. I could ignore Mark but events arose that made my being there untenable. I’ll tell you why. When I was 12 or 13 years old I read Julius Cesaer. In this case, I’m referring to the last scene where Brutus, sticks the dagger in Cesaer and he says “Et to Brutus”, “You also, Brutus?” Yes, Brutus was trying to save the republic from Tyranny, but where did loyalty and honor go? What struck me the most was that it showed that no matter how you performed in the past, peoples’ jealousy and greed, and pursuit of power render your past as the past. Today

we would say “What have you done for me today?”

I don’t care, I side with. I gave you this story to tell you that Mark was having a “thing” with his boss’s wife. I told you this before, but I caught them together in a pretty compromising situation. What do I do? Do I tell Mr. John? If not, Mark’s going to try to get rid of me any way. I had an enemy and now he was a more powerful enemy. The worst part was I knew then, my future at SONOCO was no more. One way or the other I was going to be forced out.

Time and time again. This wasn’t any different once I made the decision, I was gone in 4 days. I was offered a position as soon I became available to the market. Consulting and Safety Specialist out of Thibodaux, Louisiana taught offshore safety to all companies. The owner had one thing in mind. I was going to be his “Special Projects Manager” and I would write grants, so that all these other companies could get their training paid for also. Guess who the pay and training contracts would go to? Yep, Consulting and Safety. It was a good position created just for me.

I get bored doing just one thing, so I wrote grants and *taught* all of their courses at one time or another. My food safety expert status allowed Consulting to add another feather in their camp as well. This was another area they could expand in to local restaurants and eating establishments.

I worked there from January to August 28th, 2005. In that 9 month period. Companies I worked and wrote grants for, were awarded over 900,000.00 dollars in grant money for offshore training. Not bad for nine months work. I think I covered my 70K a year salary, what do you think?

Things there, were not like at SONOCO. Honestly, the atmosphere was completely different. I went from working to a very honest man, to an *almost* honest man. I gave him the same warning before he ever started this venture that the only way to do it was on the up and up. He should expect to be audited and you had better be able to account for the training the supplies and anything else, you charged the government for.

The first six months were fine. I didn’t see any problems. The training was going on, people were happy, and things were being

accomplished. That's when the first small crack appeared. It was minor. One course had not been completed but the guy needed to get offshore. I was to sign off that he performed the module. He would complete it when he got back. I didn't like it but I did it.

I saw the slippery slope and I didn't like what I was seeing. The owner of *Consulting* wanted to expand, but money arrived from the state when it arrived. Delay is inevitable when dealing with grant money. I think but I can't confirm it, that he got it in his head that he would go ahead and bill now and teach later. By doing this he would avoid that Net 90 that the government pays at. That way the paying would be in time with delivery of the product. It was a little unethical but not illegal right. He was performing the training just not at the time specified. Who really cared?

I did. I felt responsible because I was responsible for getting the money for these people. I did a good thing but it was being perverted. Do I report it? If I did I cut my own throat. I'm pretty sure I'd be out of a job. More important, if you're a whistle blower, who on earth is going to trust you? Right, wrong, or indifferent, you were

untrustworthy and always will be considered that way. I don't know of any business that would knowingly hire one. It's a bad situation and that is the reality. God provided an answer to my problem. He solved it for me. Guess how? What's the old saying, "***This is not the answer that I was looking for***"?

Chapter 46

Everything Changes like dust in the Wind. A Big Wind..... Hurricane Katrina



My life and the lives of a million other people changed the night of August 28th 2005. It literally changed the face of south Louisiana overnight. I got to participate first hand lucky me. We were some of

those that stayed by choice. You never know with a hurricane for sure, what it is going to do. You have to guess. If you leave and guess wrong, you could spend hundreds of dollars for no reason. On the other hand if you guessed right, if you don't leave at least 24 hours before the hurricane is scheduled to "hit", you might be stuck on the road when it gets to you. That's the gamble isn't it?

We knew she was coming. Hell, everyone knew it was coming. Nobody knew she was going to turn into a Category 5 from a Category 3 in the last 12 hours. As Gomer Pyle would say "Surprise, Surprise, and Surprise.

You have a million people all leaving at the same time. A million people who want all of the gas and all of the hotel rooms at same time. The system just

can't handle it. Everyone on the coast knows it, *and chooses to live with that possibility*. It's the cost of living close to an ocean the world over.



college professor next to a blackboard. On the blackboard was a picture drawn of a toilet. On the top portion/tank was the caption "Lake Ponchatrain". On

the bowl (and lower portion) was the caption "New Orleans". The overall caption of the cartoon read "This is the situation with Katrina, when she hits the top bowl....." No one knew it was going to be right on the money.

We got lucky in a round and about way. Do you remember that my daughter's mother in law was a carpenter? She had just finished building her a house. It was a beautiful 2 story brick. I couldn't help but associate it with the story of the three little pigs. Did you want to be in a straw house in a hurricane? No, then what about a wood/stick house? No again? Your right, best to be in a brick house when the wind comes, to huff and puff and blow your house in!

It started about 4:00 in the afternoon. Houma is only 35 miles southwest of New Orleans. It was even more out in the exposed swamps than New Orleans.

Up to about 8 hours before it turned into a category 5 everyone was pretty optimistic. I remember a political cartoon in the Times Picayune newspaper. It showed a

We never really worried about washing away nor the house blowing down. What we did worry about after dark were all the trees snapping in the wind. I'm not talking about little snaps but huge entire tree trunks snapping and blowing away. We lost power just after dark so all you could hear was the wind blowing and trees snapping. You couldn't see anything else. It was way, way too dark.

I was glad everyone was together. There was Nancy and her new husband Jerry, their 4 dogs, Stephanie and Brenden and her husband Darrell, plus their two labs. Nancy was Darrell's mom. Finally there I was. I wasn't scared, mais none! Yet!

We lost power about 9:00 that night. The eye was still

southeast of Venice and predicted to head straight up the Mississippi. If that were the case, we would be within the “kill zone” or 30 miles from the inside of the eye. It was going to be bad. Very bad.

For nine hours the wind howled as the storm came in. About 1:00 in the morning it calmed down. We went outside with flashlights and looked around. Almost every tree around the house was blown down. One missed the house by less than 10 feet. So much for the trees they took care to leave in the yard, when they built the house. Every single one was gone or damaged.

Less than an hour went by before the wind started picking up again. The eye had passed, and we were getting ready for the backside of the storm. In many ways this part is worse, because that's when you get all the tornados, along with hurricane force winds in excess of 200 miles per hour. Boo ya.

We survived, and once it got light we surveyed the damage. Trees were down and power lines were the same. All in all, it wasn't too bad for us, but we didn't have any flooding. The storm had stayed just east enough to spare us that damage. We didn't get power back for 10

days which was an inconvenience but that was about it. One thing though, if you don't have power, you don't pump gas! Without gas, you stay put. Most of us from Houma did just that. I couldn't. I had two sisters that lived dead center where Hurricane Katrina hit. One sister, Candy lived in Bay St. Louis, and another in Waveland, Mississippi, right next door. They weren't so lucky.

It took me two days to get to them and cell phones were out as everyone knows. I made it after 5 hours of driving. The normal trip would have been less than 2 before the storm. I've got to describe what I saw. Even though you saw pictures and TV footage, the horror on the ground, was never really shown. All you heard about was shootings and looting in New Orleans, the people trapped in the Superdome, and the mass chaos that irrupted because our government was too lazy and too inept, to do something about a situation they knew was coming. I mean really, we can have disaster relief to any part of the world within 24 hours. Why should it take 3 days to get water to the Super Dome. I don't care, to me they just didn't give a fck (close enough). Our governments' main purpose these days is to

take our tax dollars and it's like Chinese products, you get no value in return. Come on guys, 3 days? How can you ever justify it? Do I think it's any better? Do I think the government is going to take care of us in a bigger disaster? Come on....look at our governments' history. Guess what I think! Bigger is not necessarily better.

But there you have it. It wasn't too bad for us.

Two days later I headed toward Bay St. Louis. The devastation was so complete, it was if a 30 megaton atom bomb had been set off. No trees, and very little buildings survived on the north shore. I went all the way around to get to Bay St. Louis. Normally I would have driven straight thru New Orleans, but we knew it was under martial law, and hell the roads probably weren't passible anyway. So, I headed north to Baton Rouge then east on I-12 to the Mississippi/Louisiana State Lines.

You just can't describe it. How on earth did anyone survive, that stayed? They were miracles from God, each and every one of them. Yes, there were miracles, but people and animals were lost also. The destruction was complete. Mother Nature does a hell of a job when she puts her mind to it.

I want to tell you about 2 families that went thru the middle of the storm. The first was about Bill White of Pearlinton (that's a little town just outside of Bay St.Louis.). Mr. Bill was a retired Merchant Marine. He did 40 years on the oceans of the world, and had seen pretty much everything there were to see. He was 82 years old, his wife had died and he had 2 sons who lived on the west coast. The bastards didn't even come to see him after Katrina. The man lost pretty much everything. It doesn't matter how bad a dad he was, he had to have been at sea earning a living most of the time. How can you not check on your father? No Matter What! My daughter's husband's family are the same way. They all live within 5 miles of each other. They never talk and almost never see each other. Nancy lives 2 trailers away from her mother and never talks to her neither, how can you even call yourself family?

Back to the story, Mr. Bill knew Hurricanes. He had a 2 story brick house in town and the house had weathered many a storm. He felt confident they (meaning him and his 5 dogs) would be ok. The water came up and they went to the second floor. It kept rising,

and they went into the attic, and finally he cut a hole in the roof. They water made it up to his chest with him holding his dogs above water before it started to recede. He survived it but barely.

The other family lived right on the ocean next to my sister's house in Waveland. Their house like my sisters' was on 10 ft. pilings. It also had survived many a storm. It has even survived Camille in the 1960's. They stayed. They didn't have a car.

The storm washed the house clean off the pilings. It floated inland with this family within it. It finally impacted something and broke apart. He never saw his parents again. He went with the debris inland 5 miles to highway I-10 before finally holding on to something before the water diminished. How would you like to have lived through that? What about living after?

Diane, my oldest sister rented a house right on the beach. It was your typical three bedroom on pilings. She moved back to Missouri just one month before Katrina hit. The house she lived in completely disappeared. Good thing she wasn't there. She would have been killed for sure.

My younger sister had a ranch style 2 bedroom in Waveland. They evacuated before the storm hit. When they returned there wasn't a ranch style house any more. Now they had a three story house. The neighbor's 2 story wood house had floated on top of my sisters' brick ranch house, and settled down on it.

Mother Nature's home improvement doesn't work. Inspectors wouldn't pass it for habitation. Too bad.

One other little note about the aftermath of Katrina. I just can't explain how bizarre it is to drive through a city you know has a million people living in it and see only a couple of lights. No cars hardly on the roads, no lights, no life. It will be eerie when the zombie apocalypse comes but I'll be better ready to handle it after Katrina. There isn't any doubt in my mind.

Chapter 47

Mike Glassford – Master Electrician



We had been going to Bay St. Louis for over 4 year, before Katrina hit. It was a nice quiet little town. Kind of unique and quaint. It was also the center of the impact zone. That's where I went to help. One thing has to be made clear. I have no

construction or carpentry skills at all.

You have all read my past up to this point. Most of the places I worked were inside buildings. When you got right down to it, *the majority of them didn't even have windows* (security or offshore, windows weren't conducive in either case).

Well, I didn't have to worry about windows anyway. There weren't any. It was just like a nuclear bomb had went off there like I told you before. I

had a week off from work and went there to help out. After something like that he first thing to do, doesn't require experience. You need a shovel, a back, and plastic bags.

Debris and mud removal, that's the name of the game. If you have flooding and water damage, you better include removal of the drywall as well. Bring it all down to the studs. Yep, that's the best way. That kind of work I could do, and I hope I was a help. I'm pretty sure I was, I've never been accused of being lazy.

Danny and Candy went to work as contractors. It was what they had done their entire life's and it's what

brought them to the bay in the first place. It was the end of my vacation week but I wasn't ready to go back. Deep down I didn't want to go back anyway. I called Thibodaux and requested another week. I didn't need the pay, so I would wave it. I just wanted to be there to help!

My boss refused. He said he needed me there. Oh boy, I felt my blood pressure rise and that's when the filter blew out (Do you have one? I've tried to have a filter installed between my brain and my mouth. It keeps blowing out or failing, we can't quite put a finger on it, but we'll keep trying to identify the problem!). I asked him for what? To lie, or to steal for him? Oops, that wasn't proper, no it wasn't prudent, .screw it, it was the truth! The next words flew out fast too.....screw you, you asshole. I've brought over \$900,000.00 to your company "guaranteed from the state", which doubles your best year's revenue, and since my salary was covered in the grant proposals, you didn't pay a dime for it. You're an ungrateful son of a bitch. Add to that the fact that your already willing to "manipulate" the system shows me your character. You know what.....bye bye....I quit.

I wish I could tell you that I saw his jaw drop but that wouldn't be a fact. I'm sure it did, but it was a conversation by phone. Damn the bad luck! It's been 8 years, I'm going to tell you something else. To everyone in the world.....the asshole tried to stiff me out of my last week check and the rest of my vacation pay. I'm not lying. No bull, how low can you be? After all I brought to his table? I'm glad I found out then. At least I cut off the spigot at that point. I actually had to threaten him eye to eye, before he would cut a check. Don't piss me off!

Well, this really changes things doesn't it? This was the beginning of October 2005. I didn't want to do it, but I went to work for Candy and Danny. They both know their shit. Candy is as smart as I am, without the education. She's as sweet and innocent as her name implies, and everyone loves her. Don't make a mistake though, don't insult her by implying she's dumb....oooh nooooo!

Here is the problem. Working for them meant, Danny would sit on his ass and get drunk or be hung over, and not do a damn thing. Candy and I, would end up doing all the work. Somehow, she had gotten used to it over the last couple of years. I just

couldn't do it. Hell, I didn't even like him most of the time.

Eating, Shelter (I didn't have to worry about that one everyone lived in a tent anyway), I needed employment so I sucked it up and went to work for them.



Now I might have exaggerated a little, but not much. Right at the beginning of December Danny and I went to the Permit Office to pull a permit for remodeling/renovation of a friends' house. The permit office, right after the hurricane had been set up at the old train station. I waited in the foyer because you wouldn't believe the line of people waiting to get a permit for construction. The vultures were already circling I thought to myself. No, it was better to wait outside in the lobby on the first floor. Thank you very much.

That's when I saw the flyer. Ed Carnahan, the local building inspector, was giving a master electrician test for the state on December the 17th.

He was a licensed proctor and could give and grade the test (this expedited *out of state* electricians getting their Mississippi State Licenses). They needed to do it because there was a real shortage of licensed electricians.

I knew the basics from my neighbor years ago. I had seen what they "called" wiring in some of the houses there already, and it was obscene. There is no way that type of work would have been allowed in Missouri, in the last 40 years. I don't know how they got away with it! I thought I could do a better job than they did.

Then, the flyer gave me the really bad news. Close for registration was that day. The fee for the test was 100.00. The administrative fee was another 50.00, then Ed's 3 day seminar was 300.00. I had to commit to 450.00 dollars on something I didn't have a clue about. Talk about needing a lot of self-confidence, I had to have it here.

I'm not an indecisive person, nor have I ever been accused of it. But I did have a moment here. That was all of the cash I had from just getting paid. Could I throw away a week's pay? Here was one of those times where you just have to have the faith to leap. I knew it, and the decision was

to.....
go!



Murphy's Law. Do I have to say anything else? I spent everything and didn't know I would need the NEC manual. That's the book that list all of the rules and regulations, and tables, that an electrician and inspectors use for electrical work in the US. It wasn't a cheap puppy. It cost 75.00 that I didn't have. It sucked. I had to go to Danny and ask to borrow 75.00. He laughed at me when I told him what I was going to do at the train station. He told me it couldn't be done. Hell, he knew electricians that did the work for 30 years and couldn't pass it until they tried 2 or 3 times. But, if I really wanted it, he would lend it to me. If I failed the test though, I paid him back 150.00. I said "What if I pass"? He thought a moment then said, "In that case you

keep the 75.00 and owe nothing." A wager, oh yea, it was on. I accepted.

You want to motivate me. Imply I'm stupid and can't do something. It's a button that will get me every time. I went straight to the bookstore in Slidell and bought the NEC Manual. I opened it and read the first chapter. This was going to be tough.

Most people don't know that the National Electric Code is written by the National Fireman's Association. That's because they have to deal with the problem, if a house isn't wired right and catches fire. This kind of makes sense, but it's organized by the potential for fire, and not like an electrician would organize it. It's really terrible.

So, I chopped it up and reorganized it into a new binder. That took me 3 days. I spent the next 2 days studying the material. I put it down until the morning before the test. I pulled everything out read it in its entirety, then went to bed. I got up the next morning, had a cup of coffee and went for a run. 2 hours later I was sitting and taking the 4 hour exam.

Since Ed was a proctor he graded the test right on the spot. I passed with an 84. Not as good as I had hoped

but a solid “B” none the less. I was a licensed Master Electrician. I went home with my card and got the satisfaction of watching Dannys’ mouth drop. I had waited for that moment for a long time. It was awesome. He had more respect for me after that.

The first house that I wired was the one my sister and her husband were working on. I did the entire house for 1,200.00 (that’s about 5,000 dollars less than anyone else would have charged). My career as an electrician in charge of “Yoda Electric” began at that moment.

My daughter came up with the Yoda Electric Idea. On my business card is a picture of Yoda holding his light saber? It has all the general information but the main saying for the company at the time was “Bring light to the Dark side”. Believe me, everything was the dark side. Nobody had lights. That’s why I became an electrician. I could bring the light! Plus it stroked my ego. You ought to see the way that peoples’ eyes light up when they get power for the first time, after doing without for months!

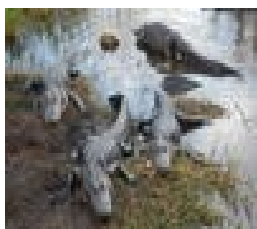
I completed all of the rough in work in 4 days and called for inspection. I’m very proud to say that on my first inspection I had zero

discrepancies, thank you very much. The inspector told me that it was one of the cleanest wiring jobs he had ever seen. Even my pulled wire through the walls had zero twist or turns. Everything was done exactly as it should be. I didn’t know to do it any other way. Good to go, oh yea.

Littl

Chapter 48

Little stories about after the Hurricane



Talk to any sociologist or psychologist and they will tell you that after food and clothing the next thing people need is shelter. After the storm there were no houses for anyone to live in. Contractors and home owners and workers, all lived in tents.

Personally, I lived in a tent 2 ½ years before getting into a house. It really isn't that BAD. I'm sitting in my tent writing this, as a matter of fact. I have been here for 3 weeks. You roll with the punches, just like the cover of the book says. I'm in a tent because I refused to give up our dogs. I'd rather give up the asshole

who hates animals if you know what I mean.

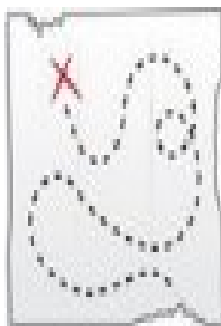
Did you wonder what we did for entertainment? What do you do when there isn't any electricity or gas, and every recreational facility is gone? We found alternative ways to entertain ourselves. I remember one instance pretty vividly.

We set up tents inside the shell of the house we were working on. Out in Pearllington, we started to work on Mr. Bill's house. At night, right before dusk, my two helpers and I would set up lawn chairs just outside the garage. The garage door had blown away so the entrance was completely clear.

We had all bought the pellet pistols because the rats and mice were so bad after the storm. There were thousands of them. They had been forced out of every of every place they had ever hid, by the flood waters. There were literally thousands. They couldn't live in those hideouts. You have to remember that every drop of oil and gas from every vehicle and underground tank that flooded, floated out of their "containers and end up in the sewers when the water receded.

That was our entertainment. We would sit in lawn chairs and shoot at the rats, as they

ran across the beams of the garage. The attic was full of them. It was just like at the penny arcade. We had a wonderful time doing it. One other little note. Some of those suckers were huge. We got rat traps at first, but the carried them away. We actually had to nail them to the studs, so the caught rat wouldn't carry the traps away.



How tough are you? We had one experience that would test your metal. Break down in the swamp in the middle of the night and walk 8 miles in the dark, alone, on the loneliest road in America, I did it with a helper going home to Pearlington.

We had went to Slidell for supplies at Walmart and it was pretty late. On the way back boom, the wheel bearing on the truck froze up. We didn't have repellent, a flashlight, nothing. We could have waited and hoped, but we knew the road. You didn't expect so see anyone. Good thing we didn't wait. We never saw anyone the whole way. We survived but boy it was scary. Things eat you in the swamp.

Chapter 49

Observations: After Hurricane Katrina

It's going to be my pleasure to shame just about everyone involved and affected by the hurricane. Each of these groups deserve it. No they earned it. Let's begin shall we.....

Those that were affected

The people of New Orleans, well, as many as they could bus to Baton Rouge and Houston, were given debit cards for two thousand dollars each. First question: Who has to be bused? Lower income people that don't have



Bingo, no give them a pocket full of money. What the hell did they expect them to do with it? They bought drugs and booze, and food. In that

cars and
were
probably
from the
projects.

order more than likely. Then the Louisiana State Government got upset? Duh?

Then you had the lower middle class and lower class white people commonly known as "Trailer Trash" or "White Trash" or "Redneck", that comprise everyone outside the first group. Most of these people received 6-10 thousand in cash assistance and FEMA trailers to live in indefinitely. Some had insurance that paid but the majority did not. If they didn't have home owner's insurance that's when the government gave them money just like an insurance company would have.

What do you think this group did with all of their money within the first year? They couldn't find contractors. Contractors went to those that had money first, then those with big insurance policies, and the very end of the line were these people. It would be 3-5 years before they could be back into a house.

Could you really, I mean really save that money? It would be interesting to see statistically how many more RTV's, four wheelers, motor cycles, and other "toys" were bought with that money. These people lost everything. You don't understand unless you have been thru it. The government and insurance

companies have already squeezed your balls and humiliated you. You have no home, no resources. What more could happen? It's easy to say "fuck it" and splurge.

I don't hold it against them. Problem was, 2 years later did come and the contractors were ready but there wasn't any money to pay them. They left just like they came.....in a wave! In the end the majority just drifted away. There other reasons besides this abuse, let's go deeper!

The Shame of the Government

Why do we have FEMA? Why do we have Homeland Security? We didn't feel any more secure than the people in the Superdome those three days before anyone got to them. Why do our taxes pay an infrastructure that doesn't do its job? You and I would have been fired. They had one person fired. Bullshit, and I'm calling it out for what it was.

I'm going to make it worse. Everyone and I mean everyone, knew the sucker was coming. Even at a Category three they should have been ready. It took four days to get food and water to Bay St.

Louis and Waveland. In this day and age, that's neglect or they just didn't care.

You think they would have taken 4 days to respond to a disaster overseas? No way. Too high profile. Besides, I think they may have thought that "the majority we really didn't need in society. Hell, just let them kill themselves. Nice way to cleanse them out if you ask me. Mother Nature did it, yea that's it. Or, were we just not worth the resources President Bush?

But, I do have to say this, they may have very well did us a favor. I know I'm not depending on them in any emergency. If the zombie apocalypse comes you know who they are going to watch out for first, themselves. Right behind them will be the police departments, Protect and serve? I'm an Interrogator, I know a lie and I'm from Missouri "Show Me!"

One last question? How can the Red Cross and the Salvation Army be there within 24 hours, serving hot meals, handing out clothing and water, and helping us survive? Why did you say you couldn't, Mr. President? I didn't understand you I'm sorry, but it doesn't matter. It doesn't ring true no matter what you said! Actions talk

and bullshit walks, who agrees with me?

The Shame of Insurance Companies

This wasn't shame it was rape and theft and they got away with it. There lobby is strong enough in Washington, that they are made of Teflon. Wind vs. Water, Water vs. Wind, whatever ploy they could come up with to not pay or delay payment of legitimate claims was unethical. They learned it from the government then got the government to initiate laws that protect them.

If you'll notice, bankers did the same thing when the economy collapsed. We even spent billions in bailing out these assholes that managed the banking and insurance markets, and what do they do "Fuck you" at every turn. Why do we keep doing it?

I will never willingly give them a dime.....ever, I don't care what the law says. I'm not going to pay somebody to screw me. If I get screwed by the law then yes, I get screwed anyway, but at least I didn't pay for it. They won't get a dime either (as you will find out later on in this book).

I heard of hundreds of stories of people getting screwed. My question is how the local agents can sleep at night. Are they that cold and heartless? They will tell you no but every one of them is up and running again, I noticed when I got back here to the Bay. Funny, people are suckers aren't they. A fool born every minute.

Let's add insult to injury. They raised all the insurance amounts on contractors arbitrarily. Cities require electricians to have 300,000.00 worth of insurance to operate. That's fair. Guess what, After Katrina you can't find an insurance company that will underwrite a policy for that amount. The minimum amount they will write one for is 2 million. They are forcing us to buy policies well over the amount required by government. What kind of shit is that? All we can do is pass it along to the customer. But, do insurance companies care? Hell no. All right, all right, I'll let that one go away. Lets' find another one.

The City of Bay St. Louis, Waveland and Hancock County

In a city of 5,000 why do you need a million dollar fire house? Why do you need a multi-million dollar government complex? Before the whole thing was operated out of an old bank building? Let's do the math. How much taxes and how long will those taxes have to be raised, with a tax base of 5,000 people and you have to pay for 5.5 million in improvements that weren't necessary? That's 100,000.00 in taxes per person isn't it? It doesn't matter. It's the governments' money, it's free!

Yea, well that thinking got us into the recession in the first place. You'd think they would know better. I mean compared to the towns' size, it's really, really, obscene. They wasted millions and worse they screwed themselves over in another way. You're going to love this.

The town council of both towns Waveland and Bay St. Louis, increased codes and wouldn't approve plans for reconstruction for hardly anyone in the area from the shore to the rail road tracks $\frac{1}{4}$ mile inland. They cited safety and the necessity to raise houses, duh duh,duh duh, duh, duh. Everyone knew the truth. Most the prior inhabintants were lower middle class working stiffs. The city council saw the

opportunity to get rid of the rif raf, an pull in a better quality resident. One that could be taxed at a higher rate. Also, they had a couple of the Biloxi and Gulfport casinos



nibbling since they were closer to New Orleans traffic by 40 miles round trip.

At one time they were looking at annexing all of the property mentioned before under imminent domain. They had that case in Massachusetts where the city bought up a bunch of property under imminent domain, then sold it to a casino under "rural development". Yea right. Who got paid off for that one?

They changed zoning requirements and made it impossible to comply. I drove along the coast yesterday from Biloxi all the way to Pearlington. The least developed area is that area in Bay St. Louis, and they have ha ha, to raise taxes because

there aren't enough people to cover the cost of an expanded government. Damn, probably should not have run away all the peons away, huh?

***Hancock County,
Mississippi – Twin to
Joplin, Mo***

Except for the scenery change the governments and the police are identical. They have an interest in intimidation, incarceration, manipulation, and keeping people in the court system and paying out every month. They even built a jail worth 10 million dollars. They must be expecting good business huh.

From what I can see, what they can't get legitimately they will get the other way. What is the old saying by hook or by crook? That's them, I've seen it up close and personal. They waste money, arrest people, and have no sympathy or regard other than "*pay yo money, sucker*".

We're just passing thru now, there isn't any way I would live here again. Prior to the hurricane it wasn't a bad place, but now.....Keep it for yourselves. No thank you, I've already got the tee shirt.

Pearlington is in Hancock County. It has a population of about 200 give or take. Just a tiny little place with a beer

joint, a gas station, and a title loan, ha ha (but it's true). Can you believe the residents have been waiting 8 years for the buyout because they live in a wetlands? The county hasn't finished the governments requirements for the buyout.....The can finish the jail though! It shows you where the priority is. Actions talk and bullshit walks! These people can't even get permits to finish their houses. Sorry no permits will be issued in that area.....sorry.....you can wait.....we don't live there! What do we care?

Chapter 50

Here Comes the Great Depression



By July of 2008 you could feel things changing. I had been in the South since 1995. After 13 years, I was kind of getting the itch to go home anyway. I was pretty tired of depression, devastation, nasty brown water and dust and debris everywhere.

I knew that I could live in Missouri 2 months for every month in the South along the coast. After people did get homes built, rent doubled in price along the coast. A two bedroom in town was 300 and now was 700.0 per month.

I had been working in all of that devastation for right at 3 years. I was tired and burned out, work had been slowing down for months. Lord knows that I was ready for a change. Missouri worked for me. I don't think that I told you that Candy and Danny had already left and went back. There good for about a year, maybe a year and a half from Joplin, then they get homesick and have to go back. They do own a home there, so it's always an intent. They just almost never find work there, that's why they have to leave.

I called Candy and just by



coincidence, they had started on a house that needed a full rewire. I had enough for the

trip back, but that would allow me enough to get re-started after I got there. Here we go again. Pack it up, we're going home for the first time in 14 years. New Chapter.....New Adventure!

Gomorrah? This might have been a case of "his wrath" as well. You'll understand more when I finish this one.

October 2008, I was back home in Joplin. It was fall and the leaves were changing. I hadn't seen an autumn in years. The colors of the leaves, especially the maples, honestly, I had forgotten just how beautiful they were.

We worked and on the weekends went down to the mountains, and went canoeing. Yes, we went canoeing with it 40 to 50 degrees. You can't understand how peaceful it is to canoe, when no one else is on the river. The leaves are on the water and its complete bliss. You really have to try it sometime.

It all started so great, it really did. I was happy for the first six months, *until I found out what it was really like there.* I'm going to tell you a depressing story this time. A story of how a town can be eaten alive from the inside out.

You know how god destroyed Sodom and

Chapter 51

Joplin, MO

*“If God was
going to stick an
enema in the
earth, this is
where he will put
the tubes’ end.
I’m sure!”*



I want
to tell you
the true
history
and
current status of this city.

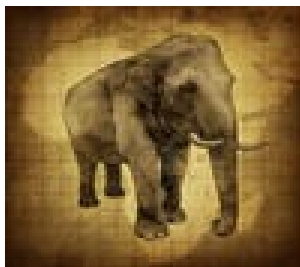


It began in the late 1870's. Carthage 20 miles away had a marble mine and was the real economic center of the area after the Civil War. Joplin held the miners and their families. These “types” were discouraged from living inside Carthage proper. That was reserved for the money, if you know what I mean.

What happened from there was the same thing that happened along a line from Minnesota to Louisiana. People moved west. The same thing happened here. Joplin was 20 miles further west and full of miners. Miners dig holes. They dug a few holes around Joplin, and lo and behold, they found something that was always in need.

Lead, it was almost as good as gold, as far as the world was concerned at that time. Lead made bullets and was used for plumbing. *That was a new market on the east coast.* There was money to be made, and by god it was available for the common man to get.

There was a rush on land and the miners flooded into the area. They started digging



holes in a 100 mile grid that would have made the miners of Egypt proud. There are chat piles 100's of feet high still lying around everywhere to this day. An unintended testament to the work they did.

By the turn of the century, Joplin was a metropolis and a major transportation hub for points west. Carthage was left in the dust and started its slow decay at this point. Joplin on the other hand continued to grow.

The city had a public transit system equal to St. Louis. It ran trolleys as far as 20 miles away in Carthage. Can you imagine a public trolley that went 20 miles in 1900 in America? No one remembers that any more. It's a shame. The system ran to the adjoining three towns on the north east and west sides. They were all about 10 miles away.

Another little tidbit of information. Why are most towns in America 10 miles apart from one another? Go look at a map. Except for really mountainous regions, it pretty much

holds true. It's because that was the distance that could be traveled by horse and buggy in one day and be able to return home before dark. That was an important security consideration back in the day.

Not only that, these people who had been used and abused were improving their quality of life. They built one of the most impressive park systems of any city in America



at that time. They had the first completely lighted (electricity was brand new!) park and zoo in the US. I know almost none of you knew that!

The city prospered all the way up to the 1940's. Road systems were great. They had chat from all the mining to put down for road beds. Alleys were chat, there wasn't a dirt road, anywhere for 20 miles in any direction. Then the bottom fell out.

World War II ended, and other lead mining was being performed cheaper in other countries. The city began cutting back on services, reducing the transit, system, closing city parks, cutting cost

instead of cutting the government size.

Anyone planning on going into city government and building need to play Sim City. This is a simulation game where you have to build a city a little bit at a time. With limited resources you develop the infrastructure of a town. If you screw it up the town fails. That's what happened to Joplin. They cut back on services, increased taxes and people started to leave. Their growth phase was over. Decline was in the cards.

There was an important lesson to be learned here. You decrease quality of life of people, and they will leave. The remaining will be taxed to death and they too will eventually leave. The remaining can't leave or are unwilling to. They are the assholes that destroyed everything in most cases and don't realize that it was time to go a long time ago. Go figure!

Thru the 1960's, 70's and then the 80's, the city hung on. It was stagnant. No real growth or opportunity were on the horizon. To make things worse, the EPA had decided that everyplace was contaminated with lead. Remember all that chat they

laid everywhere. Oh yea, they contaminated everything with lead levels that were near toxic levels. Good old government.

By the 1990's things changed. They changed in a way no one expected. A death peal could be heard in the future. Meth Capitol of the World. A new beginning and guaranteed end.



When my daughter and I first got to know Joplin, it was the early 1990's. Someone had come up with bathtub crank. It looked like peanut butter and gave a buzz like the old white cross of the 1960's. It was a hit. It didn't take it any



time at all to start sucking money away from people. Friends started stealing from friends. People you had known you whole life could turn around and stab you in the back. Kids stole from parents and other family members, that's the real "meth

crises”, it creates the “zombies”, thieves, and raging lunatics you’ll find when the zombie apocalypse hits.

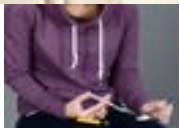
Now, 15 years later it’s worse. The first year back I lived outside of town and I had a great time. I made of the mistake of moving into town because work was slowing down there too. The recession/depression was in full speed ahead mode at that point. It was early 2010. Moving into town meant saving 100.00 per week in gas. That was significant enough of a reason to make the move.

Joplin Police Department were starting to get bad by the mid 1990’s when I left. By 2010 they were a force of thugs, jack boots (it has to be what the police force became just before Hitler came to power and immediately after. They weren’t quite organized but they had terror tactics down to a science. That’s exactly how Joplin is today. They have tactics that completely ignore civil rights. I’m not talking about bending them, I’m talking about hating and ignoring them.

I’m going to be sued but in my estimation, they have intentionally created a corps of “indentured servants” using the “injustice system” that’s developed between the courts

and the police. I will not say law enforcement because they do not enforce anything but their greed. They break the laws and civil rights of this nation every day in the pursuit of free labor and the almighty dollar. It’s obscene. They have created a “Debtors Prison” and rotate a good percentage (all poor) of the population thru there on a frequent basis.

Civil rights you ask? You don’t have rights. Freedom



from
illegal
search
and

seizure or running your name just because you’re walking down the sidewalk, forget them. They are ignored by the justice system. As a matter of fact. The court encourages it. It keeps the revenue dollars flowing. I estimated that just the City Court of Joplin, is grossing over 1 million per month. That’s a pretty hefty piece of pie. That’s every month from a population of 60,000 before the tornado.

No let's reduce that because they don't target the rich or influential. Let's say 30,000 pay that debt every month. Hell, they have to produce meth just to keep up with the courts. I personally think that the courts know this. They arrest someone for meth, release them immediately, let them run and then arrest all their friends. Then they run them thru the local courts, fine them with community service to the city, and they pay a fine. It's a perfect rotation system. You have to admire just how balsey they are.

So hats off to the Joplin Police

YOU ALL DIE PAINFUL DEATHS AT THE HANDS OF ALL OF THOSE THAT YOU SCREWED. ASK MUSSOLINI AFTER WW II WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU! HUNG BY THE NECK IN YOUR OWN ROBES AND DRAGGED THREW THE STREETS. May that be the final epitaph of all thugs and tyrants!



Department and the Joplin Court System. Let's not forget their guidance counselors, the Joplin City Council for letting it happen and encouraging it. Hats off to you guys!.....IN SHAME.....I DETEST AND ADMONISH EVERYTHING YOU STAND FOR.....MAY

Oops almost forgot, here's another shout out to Manuel Noriega. You know what I'm talking, about don't you Manuel?



it looked
pretty dark
and the rain
had started.
I didn't even
know there
was a
tornado until
15 minutes
later when
one of my
sisters came
over to the
house. How
bizarre is

that?

Oh, I'm not done with that city yet. Not by any means, am I finished. I have stories to tell.

Everyone knows about the tornado that hit in May of 2011. It took out a stretch of the city a mile wide and 10 miles long. I have never seen a tornado follow that straight of a path anywhere, at any time. You could actually drive down 32nd street the whole way, and 20th street the whole way. Everything in between was just gone.

The devastation was identical in my eyes to that of Katrina. Yes, somehow I was somewhere where another disaster or catastrophe was happening. I was outside not 15 blocks from where the tornado hit, working on a car outside. I heard the sirens and went in the house because

As far as my family goes, well we got very lucky. My niece Krystal, was right on the edge of it in her apartment. Now this is a girl who doesn't even like thunder storms, rode out that tornado all by herself at the beginning edge of an F-5. It blew out all the windows of her apartment and she ended up ok. She was the first one that my sister Lisa and I were able to get to. She lived right on 21st and Harlem. At 22nd and Harlem there weren't any houses anymore.

My sister Candy lived about 10 blocks due west at 21st and Willard. Remember that the tornado, went in a straight line. Candy and Danny were down at the farm 50 miles south of Joplin when the twister hit. Their house had the fences on both sides of the house get demolished by debris, their house? It

wasn't even touched. Again, like their daughter Krystal, Go 50 ft. south and from there on for 15 blocks was nothing but debris. How lucky was that?

Then there was our Mom, Sharron Glassford, she lives at 34th and Pitcher. Only 4 blocks from the edge of the tornado on the other side. She had some wind damage but they were spared a lot of damage because her house is in a valley. Thank you Jesus, for letting everyone survive in my family. I appreciate it!

I had to bring up the tornado a little earlier than I had hoped because, I want you to see for yourselves the motivations of those people in charge of the city and its' citizens.

You know how they say most accidents happen within a few blocks of your house, well for me it was true. One morning early in June of 2011, I caused an accident 4 blocks from my house. I pulled out in front of a guy, and he just nicked the bumper of my truck. You couldn't hardly see the damage on the other guy's vehicle but he raised holy hell. He called the cops and when they got to the scene, I found out I had a suspended LA license because I didn't pay a ticket. He gave me 4 tickets.

No seatbelt
No insurance (I just bought a SUV, 3daysbefore)

Driving on suspended
No Tags (thought I had 10 days but nope, not there)

So, 4 tickets, that was great. I was doing volunteer work, wiring on 2 houses for storm survivors, and one house for money. They officer was told and told me in return "Aw, I guess you're going to support the city too, now aren't you?" Asshole, I thought, and he carted me off to jail, where I had to pay a bond of 175.00 to a bondsman.

They hit me 3 more times in the same week and I now had a total of 16 tickets. Hell, the state of Louisiana didn't even have time to send me a copy of something, so I could pay it yet. Oh, they had them another sucker. This one was from *out of state*. Those were there favorite "flavor" after the storm. Easy pickings for their paychecks. Keep that money in the community, eh? Their citizens pay it out and they make sure and take it back. Hell, it was another new side business.

When you have 16 tickets pending you hire a lawyer. I did. I hired Shannon, a friend of my Mom's. She did the normal contact the

Prosecuting Attorney, make a deal, and call it a day. The price for being easy prey was 1,200.00 in fines. 120 hours of community service, all to be completed and paid before their “compliance hearing”, in 45 days. One other thing, if I got caught driving without a license again, they would make it a felony.

Oh, it gets better. In 45 days I went back to court alone. I couldn’t afford more to an attorney. But, I had paid 950.00 of the 1,200.0 dollars I owed and wired 2 houses in the destruction zone for free, that belonged to members of my church. When I say free that wasn’t true. I spent over 1,500.00 in wire, to do both houses. The labor was free to my congregation members, but I paid my helper out of my pocket. No, it wasn’t free. But I thought it was community service and I was happy to help!

This made me feel pretty confident when I went back to court that morning. I stepped up before the judge and asked for a 15 day extension to finish paying the fine and told him of my compliance to 120 hours of community service. He looked at me and told me. “You are not in compliance with the fine nor with the community service, is that correct? I stated “Yes sir, but

only to one, the other/community service I have more hours that you required.”

He shook his head no and stated. The court does not recognize your community service. If it is not approved by the court beforehand it will not be admitted or allowed. Further. You failed to pay your fine as stipulated in your first court appearance. I therefore hold you in contempt.

Then they stepped over the line, when I failed to come back and pay everything that day you know what the City of Joplin did? They issued 16 warrant fees at 50.00 per warrant. Instead of paying off a single ticket with the 950.00 they had received, they applied only a partial amount to each ticket, then said no tickets were paid off, all were only partially paid. Now, what kind of chicken shit, petty, only for the money action is that? Have you ever heard of something like that from a court of law? Let’s take it the rest of the way, I was now back up to 1,200.00 to be paid again and I owed them 240 hours of community service all over again. For all the effort I made to comply, they turned around and started me out all over again, with the threat of comply or go to jail. No matter what view you take (I

admit I was wrong) that was not “justice” by any definition of the word. It’s theft and preying on the unfortunate. Sue me Joplin, that’s my interpretation of the events. Do I still have Freedom of Speech?

The longest the city can hold you at any one continuous stretch is 100 days. I told them I wasn’t going to pay them a dime. No way shape or form. I would rather go to jail, than pay the City anything. Screw them. Now, I had never been to jail before, for more than a weekend, 90 days was a whole lot longer. When you’re in jail, they only pay 25.00 per day toward your fine. 1,200.00 dollars is a lot of 1:25’s to put together.

I will admit that they made me a trustee with the best job in the joint on the second day. It was wash police and detectives cars. You got to go outside in the compound all day and be in the sun, no supervision was needed because you were a trustee. The benefit was that your days went 2 for 1. That’s a pretty good incentive. For me, it would cut my time from 90 days to 45.

All of the police and detectives loved my work. I

cleaned those cars inside and out and made sure they even smelled good, before the next shift. The detectives got dusting and armor all, the full treatment. Hell, what else did I have to do? Might as well do the best job I could.



Then I forgot the very first rule of institutional anything.....you never, never, never volunteer for anything. It will always come back to bite you in the butt. In this case it happened. The end result was I got to spend 10 days in lockdown, bless their little hearts!

“When in times of tyranny and injustice, the laws oppress the people rather than help, then the “out-law” must rise to protect the people and take his place in society”.

The

Legend of Robin Hood

**In Tyranny lies only failure.
If America continues on
this path, I’m sure The
United States cannot
remain united. Me.**

***“Rise and Rise Again until
lambs are turned into
LIONS”***

**Translation: Stand up and
keep standing up to
oppressors until all turn
against them! In
modern English: “Never**

**give up, never surrender”
My Motto!**

I was stupid, I’ll admit it. I had the good intention of helping the other inmates. Here’s how it went;

Joplin City Jail is always and I mean always at maximum capacity. Usually they run 20 people over, and have them sleep on the floors. They’ve been cited but they do an excellent job of shuffling and hiding the facts. When they are inspected, they always know it’s coming, they early release enough to become legal. Oh yea, they have it down to an art. I watched it every week. They had an old lady that cooked for entire jail with the help of a trustee, who usually worked from 0500 to 2200 (5:00 am to 10:00 pm.) He did get a chance to go back to his cell and sleep during the afternoon about 3 hours). What I didn’t know was, the Trustee did all of the cooking and cleaning on the weekend by himself. That is for everyone all 70-90 people, cooking and washing their dishes/that’s too much, even for a prisoner.

That was not a problem for me I didn’t think. I was volunteering to be the cook

for the entire 4 days that the real cook was on vacation. I told them my experience and they let me prepare a meal to test me. After that, even the guards ate the next 2 meals.

I told them that I was capable of continuing my outside duties, and have the meals prepared on time and safe. Everyone loved it too much. There were a couple of guards that didn't like it. Funny, both of these guards had "confrontations" in the past with my little brother Kelly.

I had went to sleep as soon as I finished cooking and cleaning the kitchen. It was about 7:00 p.m. I knew I would have to be up at 0300 to start breakfast. It wasn't much to cook, but it all had to be prepped. The guards that came on at 6:00 pm woke me up at 7:30 and told me I was the kitchen trustee and that I had to serve the supper meal and clean up, before I could go to sleep. At 11:00, I finished and went to sleep. At 3:00 am when the same guard woke me up, and told me to get in the kitchen. He barked it at me.

It was a black guard and he prodded me with his night stick. I sat up look him straight in the eye and told him "If you want a nigger go out and buy one". I'm not prejudiced. I'm really not.

But I just had to push that button. I called a spade a spade.

That got me a good ass beating and 10 days in lock down. Best 10 days sleep I had in there. There wasn't any snoring or other fools acting stupid. Keep me there anytime, it's a hell of a lot better than in a pod with 30 other guys.

You have to understand that lockdown didn't mean complete isolation. They only had one cell like that. No, it was a 2 man cell they threw me in. I swear to you, it was just like in a movie. No shit! They threw me in a cell with a guy they considered crazy and mean. He was in there for shitting in his hand and throwing it on the guards when they opened the door. They had thrown him naked in the rubber room because he came in drunk and gave them a hard time. So, he gave them something in return. Good for you Dave!

They expected me to cower in the corner. I'm sure they were looking forward to it. Dave was a screamer. He would pound on the door, kick and scream at the guards. They were really going to fix my ass.....
.....put him in with the psycho, he's never been in jail, that will teach

him.....or so they thought.

By 0800 when the day shift came on, all was quite. David wasn't screaming and they got worried. I think they thought that he might have killed me. We were total opposites (him druggie/drunk/uneducated and me the opposite) and they came to the door and opened the inspection slot.

Guess what they found. I personally think the look on their faces said it all. There was Dave and I sitting on the floor. I had made chess pieces out of paper and I was teaching him to play chess. Oh, they were pissed. Sorry it didn't work out like you planned. Aw, my heart just bleeds for them.

After 3 days of this, they took Dave away. I guess they figured that I might not be able to deal with the isolation, ha, guess again. I was happier than a pig in a "Waller". I had books, food, a quiet place to read, no distractions. Hell, I'd pay money for that on a vacation.

Then I became the jail house attorney. I told so many people who were being railroaded how to defend themselves and who to contact. Somehow they were ready for me to go when the time came. I just don't understand it. Somehow

things just didn't work out like they had hoped. I didn't feel the appropriate level of "angst" they required. Oh well, I don't do "angst" just like I don't do drama.

Steven Hudson, the thief I told you about earlier, got me my second 10 day lockdown for fighting. Again, it was worth it. Now, I'm just a little shit and I'm old. There isn't any way around it. But, I got into a third fight. The younger ones by the time I left wouldn't fuck with that little crazy mother. He's not afraid of anyone. Pussies! My sisters are tougher than these guys. These are meth thugs? They wouldn't make it in a third world country prison let me tell you.

I did all my time. Paid off all my fines by doing the time. Unfortunately I still had the community service to do. By now it was the beginning of November. I had to have all 240 hours done before 12/31. If not they would make it 480?

To make 240 hours in 8 weeks you have to do 60 hours per week. That's ridiculous but they want you to fail. It's in their best interest to have you fail. That just keeps you in the system that much longer. Hurray for failure.

Damn the bad luck. I haven't disappointed this

many people in years. Within 5 days of working community service in the kitchen at the Salvation Army, their cook got arrested and I became in charge of the kitchen. There was a real need like I told you before. Bottom line was, I did 287 hours of community service to people that needed it. Screw you City of Joplin. You created the need to feed over 300 dinners per meal every day 24/7. People are homeless and have no money because they are intentionally kept that way. Sounds feudal doesn't it? It really, really is. In 2013 in America. Can you believe it?

I was told that once they get their hooks into you they never want to let you go. Listen to this, I'm sorry, read this;

All of my paperwork was completed, everything faxed to the compliance officer. I did my duty and I do it good. I complied. Grudgingly, but I complied.

The first week of January 2013, Friday night and I'm at my house alone. There's a knock on the door and I go to answer it. I am just getting ready to eat dinner and watch TV. Who is coming to see me? Lo and behold its 2 police officers. They ask me who I was and I told them. They asked if they could come in a minute.

I figured they were there for my brother who was always in trouble, it couldn't be for me no way, I was in court on Monday and I wouldn't have been released if I had any wants or warrants. No they were there for me. The City of Joplin had issued a warrant for my arrest for non-compliance with a court order. Friday night, they brought me to jail and I had to sit there all weekend. No bond, I had to appear before the judge per the terms of the warrant.

Oops, sorry on Monday. They had "lost or misfiled" my paperwork. Sorry for the

mistake and the weekend in jail.

Finally it's over? No sorry, you don't really expect us to let you go that easily? *So sayeth, the Court*, 2 weeks after this in late January, I received another letter of City of Joplin, saying I had another court hearing to discuss "previously undiscussed fines". That's what the letter said "previously undiscussed fines". Now what the hell is that? How can you have such a thing?

.....***When Lambs become Lions***". I am now the Lion, and they will be the prey.....***Hear me Roar!***

I thought I would do it at the polls. After all its America right? If you don't like something you vote to change it. Um, what happens when there is no choice? I know exactly how they feel in the Soviet Union and China.

Oh my god. There was not a single choice for city or county governments in the November 2012 election on the ballot. I'm serious. Only one choice for each position. This scared me more than anything else, and began my thoughts into writing a book and exposing it before it gets too over-whelming. Knowledge is power and exposure more often than not, destroys thugs and tyranny. I'm hoping so here.

That is not democracy.
 That is fascism, socialism, or
 communism, but it is not
 democracy. There is no way
 they are going to tell me that
 everyone in the city agreed
 that there was only one
 suitable candidate for each
 office. Show me that
 anywhere is America. I don't
 believe it exist. That told me,
 that either the opposition or
 people in general, are so
 “**cowed**” that they don't resist
 or feel it's even worth the
 effort or, a real “miniature
 country” existed where all of
 the values of the United States
 were thrown out the window.
 It was located dead center of
 the United
 States.....
 ...no way, I hope.

**not the “unusual’ ,but was
 now *the norm* in the United
 States. This is the New
 America!**

In a weird way I have to
 thank the City of Joplin. It
 motivated me to get off my
 butt and fight back. I was *like*
most Americans and had blinders
on to what was happening around
me. That's over. I have every
intention of removing the blinders of
every American in this country.
Then, if they decide this “New
America” is what they want...so be
it.....I don't have to live
with it. I can leave this
country...Can you?

NO NO NO
 that's it, I'm done. I left my
 mom and family, I left home,
 I left Missouri and I will never,
 ever go back , until those
 assholes all are in jail or out of
 office, for the suffering they
 are directly responsible for.

**Am I running from a
 problem, at that point yes, I
 was? But events that
 occurred in Florida the
 following month made me
 realize that what I
 experienced in Joplin was**

Chapter 52

Jasper County Sheriff's Office and Jasper County Court

***“When the law oppresses
the people, the Out-Law
will step forth, to defend the
defenseless”.***

Joplin City is in Jasper County, Missouri. I can't prove this but it's my understanding that they schedule court so that people in one jail miss court while in the other. Neither will allow you to contact the other to notify them you're incarcerated and will miss a hearing. You can do it by mail once a week. Good Luck with that. They do that, so they can issue warrants. Remember 50.00 dollars per warrant and you keep them in the system. That pays because the fed pays and the inmate pays. Hell, everyone pays. It's a win/win situation.

I had just had my hearing in Joplin and was not going to drive. I thought at that point that 16 tickets were enough. My original community service was to be at the Habitat for Humanity “Restore” store on the west side of town. Now my house was pretty much in the center of town. That was at the beginning of all that mess. I *wanted* to comply.

Where Joplin had one of the best transit systems in the country in the past, now it was 2 trollies on wheels (vans made to look like old trollies). They didn't go where I needed so I planned on walking it on a Sunday afternoon in February 2012. It was about noon when I started from my house. It was a 3 mile walk but the weather was reasonable. Actually, it was abnormally warm that day. So off I took west toward Restore.

Not too bad. It took me 2 hours to walk it. I had my first day on Monday morning at ten. That was the very next day. I would leave my house by 8:00. That would give me plenty of time. If it was cold, I'd be even more motivated. You never knew with Missouri weather in the winter time. One day it could snow and the next day be 70 degrees. It always changes like that.

On the way there, I stopped at the Shiffendecker Park to watch a softball game.

It was a women's game/tournament. I probably stood there for 10 minutes watching before I continued on to Restore. The building I needed to go to, was just on the other side of the park and I walked around the ball fields and got there. The bad thing was that area was muddy, flooded and wet. Oh well, lesson learned.

On the way back I went about 100 yards to the south where the land was dryer and not open field. I worked my way thru about 40 yards of woods and popped out just where the old drive in Movie Theater meets the city park. The only thing that exist now is the screen. Even the humps you would pull up on are gone. A simple single-chain stretch of chain separated the property from the road. From where I popped out I had 20 more yards to cross the old drive in lot to get to the road and dry ground. It wasn't posted so I headed across. No problem, or so I thought.

From where I came back to the road, I had about 100 yards to get back to the game. I thought, Sunday afternoon, why not. I could watch a bunch of college girls play ball. On the way to the field I noticed a truck following me with a lady in it. She seemed to pay me a lot of attention.

Oh well, it takes all kinds to make a world. I didn't give it another thought.

I went on in the park seating area, and noticed my hands were pretty muddy so I went into the brick bathroom to wash my hands. When I came out there was a Jasper County Deputy waiting for me. He told me that a lady had reported me trespassing. He grilled me for 30 minutes in front of his vehicle.

Come to find out the lady had been broken into 8 times in the last 4 months and she was accusing me of trying to steal from her. I was shocked. All I did was cut across an open field 30 yards. No signs, no postings, what's up with that?

I told the officer exactly what I had been doing and why I was walking. Not by choice but in order to comply. I even had my paperwork showing I was to start my community service the next day at Restore. He didn't care. He just wanted me to confess to stealing (I think he was the one that had to respond to this lady in the past, and as crazy as she was, that's a lot of pressure).

I made a mistake at that point. Don't ever, ever offer a cop to come into your house, even if you're innocent. Let me continue.....I told

the officer, look, I don't have anything of that ladies. You can come look in my house if you'd like. I don't care. I'll give you permission.

He turned around and asked the lady if that was acceptable before she pressed charges and she said yes. So off we went to my house. I signed a release for them to search for "stolen items". We all went in but the one officer kept me in the living room while the other officer and the women went thru my stuff. I didn't get to accompany them. She picked 3 small items (2 old cameras and a brass figurine, all of which I had for over 2 years.)

I flat out told the officer she was a liar and that I had a witness when I bought the Seneca Camera at an estate sale 3 houses down from my house when my neighbor died. There was no way an 86 year old woman had a stolen item, I'm sorry.

They didn't care. They arrested me on the spot and left the woman and the cop in my house without supervision. They could say or steal whatever they wanted. I didn't know that could happen either. So, they brought me to Jasper County Jail and booked me for Burglary.

That night I had the displeasure of having my

picture shown on the local television station as an inmate arrested for suspected burglary. There went my electrical business. I never got another call after that. Who wants a burglar coming into their house? Is he posing as an electrician to "case" the place? That was it. 3 years of exceptional work just went down the drain because of a 70 year old lady and her speculation.

The police released me after a 24 hour hold. When they released me I asked when I would have to go back to court. They said I wouldn't. The prosecuting attorney wasn't pressing charges. Great, so much for my reputation and business.

2 months later my brother and I are driving and I get stopped and arrested again in a different county. I went to jail for 15 Days and on the day I was supposed to get out nope.....Jasper county had a hold for me. Back to JASPER county jail. For never having been in jail before, this was getting to be almost boring.

Because I had "gotten into trouble again", the Jasper county Prosecuting Attorney decided to go ahead and pick up "receiving stolen property" charges against me. No, let me correct that, receiving stolen property for the

cameras the lady took. Misdemeanor charges, and I could get off if I paid those 500.00 with just probation for a year. It was another hook. I was quickly understanding how all of this was working by now. I said no but hell no, I WANTED A COURT HEARING. I had witnesses for the stuff the lady said was hers, who were with me when I bought the items, plus I had a reason for being where I was, I was reputable a licensed contractor, and this lady had made numerous complaints. Worse, she had no proof the items were hers or that they had been stolen. She never did produce a report showing the items stolen only that "cameras, golf clubs, and other items were on her other reports (these being before I even moved back to Joplin).

I felt 100% confident in getting a Public Attorney and going to court. She didn't have a leg to stand on.

Silly, silly me, I assumed that I was innocent and must be proven guilty. Silly me, I thought that witnesses to the purchase and records of the estate auction would be sufficient. Silly, silly, me, I thought that her not being able to show proof of ownership of my property would be sufficient. Silly, silly me. I thought that my

reputation, past experience, history, and service, would be sufficient against false accusations.....silly,

Silly me.

We went to court on February 7th 2013. I did my homework. Can you expect any different after reading my story? I did it well. I had brought 4 witnesses to court, documentation from Joplin City Court showing my community service at Restore, literally everything.

The lady brought nothing. Just her. No proof of ownership, no anything. Just her.

Their total case was because I had a pair of wire strippers in my back pocket when they stopped me. Yep, I did. I'm an electrician. I keep a pair of strippers in my pocket at least 50% of my waking time. Come on guys, those are burglary tools?

They next argued that I was 'casing the property'. Casing what? I just cut through the field directly in a line from someplace I was documented as starting work there the very next day. If that wasn't a reason to be there what is?

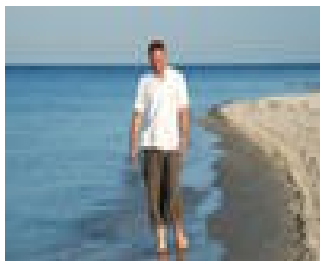
Finally, my witnesses. The judge at the end of the hearing flat out said that he didn't believe them because they were family and friends. You are calling my mother, the most honest person I know, a liar. Fuck you judge!

The hearing ended I was ready. Instead of a decision the judge goes into a tirade about how he didn't believe anything I testified to and that he thought I was guilty however, he would give me a week to prove that everything about my military history was in fact true. He would make a decision in one week time.

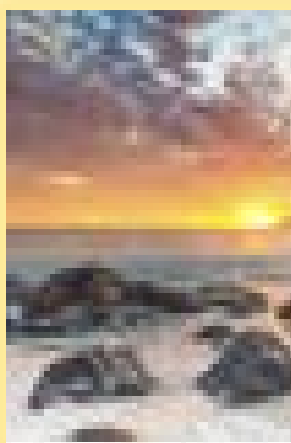
Well, I left, between this court and the Joplin City court, there is no justice there. Don't go there, stay as far away as possible. They are all crooks, thieves, and thugs. Be afraid.....be very afraid!

Chapter 53

Moving to Florida, Being with
My Daughter....Things are
looking up!



Wait...don't go
.....you know I
can't leave it like
that.....turn the
page



Well that's it. This is where
I began this mess. Kind of
anti-climactic but there it is
.....bye!

*And they lived Happily Ever
after.....The end*

Don't offer a problem if you
can't offer a solution. What
are the solutions?

*Comedy Works - Get "rid
of an asshole as a joke book
then apply it to larger
picture. "You can't just
plug an asshole. Too much
pressure buildup.*

*Expose an asshole to light
= What happens? They
prefer operating in the dark!*

*Industrial sized preparation
H*

*The Million Brick Wall of
Shame – More Bricks and*

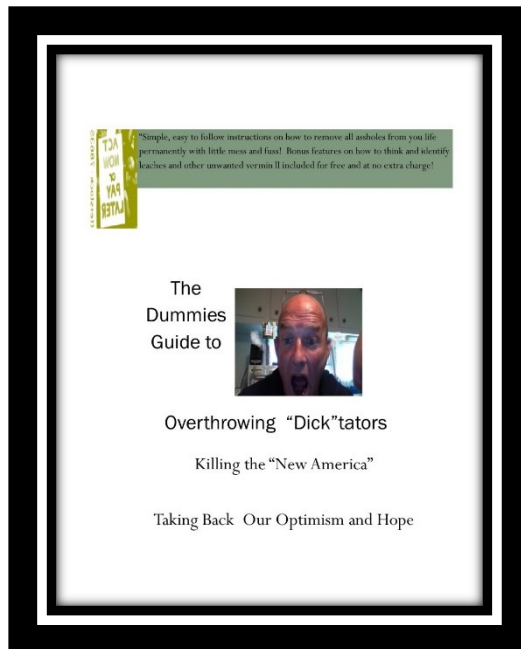
*Greater than the Great Wall
of China*

*Brought to you by the
destroyers of New
America....."We the
People !!!!!!!"*

*Creating a Modern Police
State - New America*

*New America: Be Rich
and Love it. Be poor
and work for it.*

*The Wheel of Misfortune
(just like Wheel Of Fortune
but we control the Wheel)
New America...love it or
else*



oil/gas.....insurance.....

*health/medical utilities
food....Government. Who
gets to take your money this
year? Roll the wheel! Don't
worry they are all lined up
and ready to Go!*

*Same scenario as above but
under a basketball or
football draft scenario.
Each of the major groups
waiting to be the pick for
that year. The tension
builds and the winner
is?.....*

*What do we have as a
nation to be proud of?
What are our goals...not the
governments...but our
goals as a nation? What do
we all wish for together?*

*What would make us proud
again? Beating up someone
or doing something right?*

*Can an "Asshole Free
Zone" be created?
Where.....what, when,how?*

*You need a village but what
we have is a fiefdom.*

*New America.....Let's
call it what it is..."Slavery &
Servitutde"*

*The New America and New
Statue of Liberty (revised
edition).....
Like it or else!*

Old Tablet

*New and
Improved Tablet*

Bring me your tired.....

Leave your tired at
home

*The New America:"He
who writes the
rules.....rules!*

*The New America. "Leave
the guns/take away the
bullets". In the name of
Public Safety or THEIR
SAFETY?*

Swarm them and destroy just
like in nature. The little can
fight back! Bombard their
communication system with
emails and calls. Cut them off.

No angst Zone (the letter A
and the No symbol)

Make the Predators the
Prey.....Fight Against
New America

All Wars are won in the Heart.
Put a pin prick in their hearts!

Be a Mosquito – Make an
Asshole Miserable.....Buzz
them constantly!

Force an asshole to run off a
cliff.....Drive them crazy
like a cloud of gnats!

February 26th 2013. That's
the day when things changed
again. It doesn't matter how it
ends.....right now I'm with
my daughter and everything
else is
secondary.....scree
ch.....halt....back
up.....with your daughter.
She is in Louisiana, married
and you live in
Joplin.....What's up?

Today is 9/11/2013 Oh my
god. I just spent 5 minutes
crying and trying to type at the
same time. The tears are
running off my nose and it's
really hard to type at the same
time. "Why are you crying?"
you ask? I'm crying because I
just realized how badly our
generation screwed it up. We
perverted what had not been
perverted before. If America

fails, it's my generation that
caused it. We caused it thru
greed, selfishness, drugs, and
by being short sighted and
naïve. Those people who
pulled the trigger in Dallas
changed the course of history
of America. Do you think
they knew they were doing it?
I don't know. It's all so big,
and so very simple and
dreadful in its result. That one
little pull of a trigger. 1/100th
of a second and boom, we
changed course.

It's right up there with
Lincoln's assassination, or the
shooting of the king in Serbia
that started WW I. The
smallest of acts, or the beating
of a butterfly's wings

**"You only get one shot,
there is only one chance at
an opportunity, and you
don't want to lose it. What
are you going to do? If
everything stays the same
you can expect the same
results tomorrow. Change
one variable and you start a
larger change. Take a
chance...What have you got
to lose?"**